

NEW EXCURSIONS INTO ENGLISH POETRY

EDITORS W J TURNER AND SHEILA SHANNON

SEA POEMS

CHOSEN BY MYFANWY PIPER

WITH

ORIGINAL LITHOGRAPHS

by

MONA MOORE

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INTRODUCTION

HERE there is not a single, 'row, sailors, row,' not a lady of Spain, not a bosun's mate, not a comb nor a glass, scarcely an oilskin or a Drake or a Trafalgar. Apart from this, these are the best poems or parts of poems I know that describe the sea (and seaside) or illustrate it in its relation to humanity. And as there are many different kinds of sea, from what Hardy calls "the Epic-famed, God-haunted Central Sea" to the ice-bound seas of Tartary, from the independent, cold and glorious surge of Cornwall to the complaisance of the esplanaded Channel, so there is an immense variety in its relation to man. To Swinburne it is a mother. But his passionate merging with the sea interrupts and obscures his passionate observation of it, and so the more personal passages have been avoided.

The sea is a playmate apt to turn nasty, it is alluring, it is hostile, it is indifferent, it is treacherous, human attributes that hang over from the time when it was a fighting ground for the gods: gods who gain a poetical familiarity, without losing their strangeness or their power, from Elizabethan translations. And so I have included the barbaric beauties of Chapman and Sandys' pedantic tenderness.

In late seventeenth and eighteenth century verse the ripples of the Mediterranean gods stiffen into a scollop-like pattern round more distant coasts, their swelling fury becomes a rank of formal breakers, and Neptune a mere flourish to give a certain graciousness to the spices and the icebergs of travellers' tales. But sometimes the eighteenth century had a display of fireworks over the sea all its own, and so there are surprises like Edward Young's *Ode to the Ocean*.

Landor's love and Darley's nostalgia give the gods new life. In Byron's poems, like the ghost in a country house, they are heard but not seen, and without them a certain authenticity would be lacking. After that they disappear except in answer to rare summonses like those of the Australian Kendal, and do not impose themselves upon the waves again. The sea becomes a mirror for the moods of the poet. And to its melancholy is sometimes added the great Norse burden.

Although there is a great deal of sea poetry there are many disappointments in collecting it. The sea is a persistent and recurring image but many of the most moving lines about it have been merely casual illustration or metaphor, or isolated reference

In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks

—in Shakespeare as in Hardy it constantly intensifies a dramatic moment. In Tennyson there is far less sustained description of the sea than one would have expected, but his poetry is saturated with the sea as one's hair and skin are saturated with salt after staying near it. In *The Palace of Art* the sea illustrates the claustrophobia of a scheme of life that has gone dead

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand
Left on the shore, that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white

And the sound and smell of the sea blow in flying westerly gusts through Yeats' poetry, but they are only gusts. Like love or charity the sea often becomes a great blunted abstract weapon, and then one can only shout with Robert Blomfield

"The sea, the sea, My God, the sea "

It seems to invite dramatic generalisation. The lashing of the waves and the screaming of the gulls are made to stand so often for irresolution and despair that instead of being given a new minutely-observed reality like Tennyson's rocks blown about the sky, they become so much mental scenery.

I should have expected to find more sea-side verse like Charles Tennyson-Turner's verse that recalls the early pages of Autobiographies, or personal memories, such as one of mine of a small girl dancing before her relations after dinner in the ping-pong room at a beach hotel, while outside the dark sea whitened quietly on the shore. But perhaps that kind of memory, detached and clear, like the sound of distant voices brought close by the dropping of the wind, is more often found at its best in prose.

But the accumulation does do something to unravel the feelings with which one steps out upon a sea-side platform, where, as the train moves slowly off through the dunes or the unmistakable 'seaward' hills, the smell, the salty tendrils of convolvulus struggling through the station railing, the distant, whispered roar, the terrifying familiarity, leave one stiff with an entirely welcome gloom. A gloom and a pleasure that are not in any way affected by the weather or the time of year, since they are no more dispelled by the vulgarity of a sparkling yacht-strewn blue, than they are deepened by a descending fog.

Where the presence of the sea pervades a whole poem, though direct reference is confined to a verse or two, as in Browning's *In the Doorway*, the whole poem appears. There are long extracts from *Annus Mirabilis* because it is a famous, and little-read token of a whole range of sea poetry which it outshines in wit, precision, bombast and native pride. I shall not apologise for leaving out *The Ancient Mariner*, nor shall I, here, thank my friends, though I ought to thank them in shining separate rows.

MYFANWY PIPER

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SEA POEMS

GEORGE CHAPMAN C 1559 - 1634

from

THE ODYSSEY Book V

Then labour'd feet and all parts do aspire
To that wish'd continent, which when as near
He came, as Clamour might inform an ear,
He heard a sound beat from the sea-bred rocks,
Against which gave a huge sea horrid shocks,
That belch'd upon the firm land weeds and foam,
With which were all things hid there, where no room
Of fit capacity was for any port,
Nor from the sea for any man's resort,
The shores, the rocks, and cliffs, so prominent were
"O," said Ulysses then, "now Jupiter
Hath given me sight of an unhop'd-for shore,
Though I have wrought these seas so long, so sore
Of rest yet no place shews the slenderest prints,
The rugged shore so bristled is with flints,
Against which every way the waves so flock,
And all the shore shews as one eminent rock,
So near which 'tis so deep, that not a sand
Is there for any tired foot to stand,
Nor fly his death-fast following miseries,
Lest, if he land, upon him foreright flies
A churlish wave, to crush him 'gainst a cliff,
Worse than vain rendering all his landing strife
And should I swim to seek a haven elsewhere,
Or land less way-beat, I may justly fear
I shall be taken with a gale again,
And cast a huge way off into the main,
And there the great Earth-shaker (having seen
My so near landing, and again his spleen
Forcing me to him) will some whale send out,

(Of which a horrid number here about
 His Amphitrite breeds) to swallow me
 I well have proved, with what malignity
 He treads my steps " While this discourse he held,
 A cursed surge 'gainst a cutting rock impell'd
 His naked body, which it gash'd and tore,
 And had his bones broke, if but one sea more
 Has cast him on it But She prompted him,
 That never fail'd and bade him no more swim
 Still off and on, but boldly force the shore,
 And hug the rock that him so rudely tore,
 Which he with both hands sigh'd and clasp'd, till past
 The billow's rage was, which scaped, back so fast
 The rock repulsed it, that it reft his hold,
 Sucking him from it, and far back he roll'd
 And as the polypus that (forced from home
 Amidst the soft sea, and near rough land come
 For shelter 'gainst the storms that beat on her
 At open sea, as she abroad doth err)
 A deal of gravel, and sharp little stones,
 Needfully gathers in her hollow bones,
 So he forced hither by the sharper ill,
 Shunning the smoother, where he best hoped, still
 The worst succeeded, for the cruel friend,
 To which he cling'd for succour, off did rend
 From his broad hands the soaken flesh so sore,
 That off he fell, and could sustain no more
 Quite under water fell he, and, past fate,
 Hapless Ulysses there had lost the state
 He held in life, if, still the grey-eyed Maid
 His wisdom prompting, he had not assay'd
 Another course, and ceased t'attempt that shore,
 Swimming, and casting round his eye t'explore
 Some other shelter Then the mouth he found
 Of fair Callicoe's flood, whose shores were crown'd
 With most apt succours, rocks so smooth they seem'd
 Polish'd of purpose, land that quite redeem'd
 With breathless coverts th' other's blasted shores

The flood he knew, and thus in heart implores
 "King of this river! hear, whatever name
 Makes thee invoked, to thee I humbly frame
 My flight from Neptune's furies Reverend is
 To all the ever-living Deities
 What erring man soever seeks their aid
 To thy both flood and knees a man dismay'd
 With varied sufferance sues Yield then some rest
 To him that is thy suppliant profess'd "

This, though but spoke in thought, the Godhead heard,
 Her current straight stay'd, and her thick waves clear'd
 Before him, smooth'd her waters, and, just where
 He pray'd, half-drown'd, entirely saved him there

Then forth he came, his both knees faltering, both
 His strong hands hanging down, and all with froth
 His cheeks and nostrils flowing, voice and breath
 Spent to all use, and down he sunk to death
 The sea had soak'd his heart through, all his veins
 His toils had rack'd t'a labouring woman's pains
 Dead weary was he

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE 1564 - 1593

from

HERO AND LEANDER

Upon a rocke, and underneath a hill,
 Far from the towne (where all is whist and still,
 Save that the sea playing on yellow sand,
 Sends forth a ratling murmure to the land,
 Whose sound allures the golden Morpheus
 In silence of the night to visit us)
 My turret stands

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE 1564 - 1616

from

PERICLES

A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear,
No light, no fire the unfriendly elements
Forgot thee utterly, nor have I time
To give thee hallow'd to thy grave, but straight
Must cast thee, scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze,
Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
And aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,
Lying with simple shells

WILLIAM BROWNE 1591 - c 1643

THE HARBOUR

Steer hither, steer your winged pines,
All-beaten mariners!
Here lie Love's undiscovered mines,
A prey to passengers,
Perfumes far sweeter than the best
Which make the Phoenix' urn and nest
Fear not your ships,
Nor any to oppose you save our lips,
But come on shore
Where no joy dies till love hath gotten more
For swelling waves our panting breasts,
Where never storms arise,
Exchange, and be awhile our guests,
For stars gaze on our eyes
The compass love shall hourly sing,
And as he goes about the ring,
We will not miss
To tell each point he nameth with a kiss
Then come on shore,
Where no joy dies till love hath gotten more.

from

ITER LANCASTRENSE

Heere through ye wasshie sholes
 We spye an owld man wading for ye soles
 And flukes and rayes, which ye last morning tide
 Had stayd in nets, or did att anchor ride
 Uppon his hooks, him we fetch up, and then
 To our goodmorrowe, 'Welcomme gentlemen,'
 He sayd, and more, 'you gentlemen at ease,
 Whoe money have, and goe where ere you please,
 Are never quiett, wearye of ye daye,
 You now comme hether to drive time away
 Must time be driven? longest day with us
 Shutts in to soone, as never tedious
 Unto our buisnesse, making, mending nett,
 Preparing hooks and baits, wherewith to gett
 Cod, whiting, place, uppon ye sandie shelvs,
 Where with to feede ye markett and our selvs '
 Happie ould blade, whoe in his youth had binne
 Roving at sea when Essex Cales did winne,
 So now he lives

But greater wonder calls me hence ye deepe
 Low spongie mosses yet remembrance keepe
 Of Noah's flood on numbers infinite
 Of firre trees swaines doe in their cesses light,
 And in summe places, when ye sea doth bate
 Downe from ye shoare, tis wonder to relate
 How many thowsands of theis trees now stand
 Black broken on their rootes, which once drie land
 Did cover, whence turfs Neptune yeelds to showe
 He did not allways to theis borders flowe
 We read in Caesar yt no firre trees griew
 Within this Isle, if what he write be triew
 But sure I am yt growing heere, or sent
 With storme of seas, theis are an argument

That God, offended with earth's crimes, did raine
 Till all once drownd was in a hurling maine
 Hence, tis Sarayna, yt on hills we finde
 And inland quarries things of sea borne kinde,
 Wilks, cockles, oysters threescore miles from wale
 Of sea at Conyngton was fownd a whale
 Uppon a high downes browe, whose ribs and bones
 With chance and time were turned into stones,
 And ofte earth's bosomme yeelds ye rich prizd hornes
 Of counter-poyson sea-fish unicornes
 What shall I speake of southerne yvorie
 Which yet seas vast doth in Pechora lye ?
 Such changes doe from ye great deluge springe,
 And fire shall all to ye oulde Chaos bringe

GEORGE SANDYS 1578 - 1644

from

OVID'S METAMORPHOSIS Book XI

Ceyx and Alcyone

What fault of mine, my Life, hath chang'd thy minde ?
 Where is that love that late so clearly shin'd ?
 Canst thou thy selfe enjoy, from me remov'd ?
 Doe long waies please ? is now my absence lov'd ?
 Yet didst thou goe by land, I should alone
 Grieve without feare now both combine in one
 Seas fright me with their tragicall aspect
 Of late I saw them on the shore eject
 Their scattered wracks and often have I read
 Sad names on sepulchers that want their dead
 Nor let false hopes thy confidencie please,
 In that my father, great *Hippotades*,
 The struggling windes in rockie cavernes keeps
 And at his pleasure calmes the raging Deepes
 They once broke loose submit to no command,
 But rage through all the Sea, on all the land,

Perplex the clouds, with sterne encounters rore,
 And strike forth flames I feare, by knowledge, more
 These knew I, and oft saw their rude comport,
 While yet a Girle, within my fathers Court
 But if my prayers no favour can procure,
 And that, alas, thy going be too sure,
 Take me along let both one fortune beare,
 Then shall I onely what I suffer feare
 Together saile we on the toying Maine
 And equally what'ever hap sustaine

Thus spake *Alcyone* whose sorrowes melt
 Her star-like spouse, nor he lesse passion felt
 Yet neither would his first intent forsake
 Nor her a Partner in his danger make
 Much said he to asswage her troubled brest
 As much in vaine This addes unto the rest,
 (Which answer only could her passion tame)
 All stay is irkesome, by my fathers Flame,
 I sweare, if Fate permit, returne I will
 E're twice the Moone her shining Crescents fill
 Reviv'd with promise of so short a stay,
 He bids them lanch the ship without delay,
 And fit her tacklings This renewes her feares,
 Presaging ill successe abortive teares
 Flow from their springs, then kist a sad farewell,
 Long first, at length she takes, and swowning, fell
 The Sea-men call aboard in double ranks
 Reduce their oares, up-rising from their Banks
 With equall strokes She reares her humid eyes,
 And first her husband on the Poope espies
 Shaking his hand that, answers Now from shore
 The vessell drives, and thence her object bore
 Her following eyes the flying ship pursue
 That lost, the sailes her eager gazes drew
 When all had left her, to her chamber goes,
 And on the emptie bed her body throwes
 The bed and place, with teares, to munde recall
 That absent part, which gave esteeme to all

Now farre from Port, the windes began to blow
 On quivering Shrowds, their oares the Sailers stow
 Then hoise their Yards a trip, and all their sailes
 At once let fall to catch th'approching gales
 The ship scarce halfe her course, or sure no more,
 By this had runne, farre off from either shore
 When, deepe in night, fierce *Eurus* stifly blew,
 And high-wrought Seas with chafing foamie grew
 Strike, strike the Top-saile, let the Maine-sheat fly,
 And furl your sailes, the Master cri'd, his cry
 The blustering winds and roring seas suppresse
 Yet of their owne accord in this distresse
 They plie their tasks some seeling yards bestride
 And take-in sailes, some stop on either side
 The yawning leakes, some seas on seas eject
 While thus Disorder toyles to small effect,
 The bitter Storme augments, the wild Windes wage
 Warre from all parts, and joyne with *Neptunes* rage
 The Master, lost in terror, neither knew
 The state of things, what to command, or doe,
 Confessing ignorance, so huge a masse
 Of ills oppresse! which slighted Art surpasse
 Lowd cries of men resound, with ratling shrowds,
 Floods justling floods, and thunder-crashing clouds
 Now tossing Seas appeare to touch the sky,
 And wrap their curles in clouds, frotht with their spry
 And sand now from the bottome lave, and take
 Their swarter dye, now black, as *Stygian* lake,
 Sometimes deprest, with hussing foame all white
 The *Trachun* ship such horrid changes fright
 Which now, as from a mountaine rockt with flawes,
 Viewes under-vales and *Acherons* darke jawes
 Now head-long with the tumbling billowes fell,
 And heaven survayes from that low depth of Hell
 Her wave-beat sides a hideous noyse report
 As when a battering Ram beats downe a Fort
 As chafed Lyons, whom no terrors fright,
 Rush on extended steele with horrid might

So Seas invade with storme-imbated powre
 The ships defence, and o're her hatches towre
 Her yeelding planks now spring sterne *Neptune* raves,
 Charging her breaches with his deadly waves
 The prodigall clouds in showres their substance spend
 Ambitious seas to gloomie heaven ascend,
 All heaven descending to the loftie Maine
 At least so seeme Sailes suck the falling raine,
 Showres joyne with floods No friendly star now shone
 Blind Night in darknesse, tempests, and her owne
 Dread terrors lost, these horrid lightning turnes
 To light more fear'd, the Sea with lightning burnes
 Now vaulting floods her upper deck opprest
 And as a Souldier, braver then the rest,
 Tempting t^o scale the walls with lost assaies,
 At length injoyes his hopes, and spurd with praise,
 Among a thousand only stands the shock
 So while assailing waves the vessell rock,
 The tenth bold Billow rusheth in, nor shrinks
 Untill the ship beneath his furie sinks
 Those seas, without, the labouring Bark assaile
 These sack her Hold All tremble, and looke pale,
 As at a siege, when foes inforce a wall,
 While some within to execution fall
 Art failes, hearts sinck on every rising wave
 Death sits in triumph, and presents a grave
 He weepes, He stands amaz'd, He calls them blest
 Whom funerals grace He vowes to heaven addrest,
 Looking at what he sees not, and besought
 The Gods in vaine He on his parents thought,
 His children, house, and what he left behinde
Alcyone possesst all *Ceyx* minde,
 Her onely names now in her absence joy'd
 Whose presence was his heaven and had employ'd
 His eyes last duty to descrie the way
 To her abode, but knew not where it lay
 The giddie seas so whirle, such pitchie clouds
 Obscure the skie Night, two-fold darknesse shrouds

Lowd howling whirle-winds over-boor'd now bore
The shivered mast, and now the rudder tore
A Billow with these spoyles encourag'd, raves,
Who Victor-like contemnes the under waves
Nor lighter falls, then if some God had torne
Pindus and *Athos* from their roots, up-borne
As high as heaven, and tumbled on the Maine
Nor could the ship such force and waight sustaine,
But to the bottome sinks Most of her men
The seas infold, who never seene againe
Accomplished their fates while other swim
On scattered planks, a planke upholding Him
Who late a scepter held His father in law,
And father, now invokes but could not draw
(Alas!) from either succour Still his wife
Runnes in his thoughts in that short span of life
He wisht the waves would cast him on the sands
Of *Trachus*, to be buried by her hands
Who swimming, sighs *Alcyone*, her name
His last-of speech in seas conceaves the same
Behold, an arch of waters, black as hell,
Asunder breakes the breaking surges quell
Their sinking Burthen *Lucifer* that night
Became obscure, nor could you see his light
And since he might not render up his place,
With pitchie clouds immur'd his darkned face

JOHN MILTON 1608 - 1674

from

PARADISE LOST Book VII

And God said, let the Waters generate
Reptil with Spawn abundant, living Soule
And let Fowle flie above the Earth, with wings
Display'd on the op'n Firmament of Heav'n
And God created the great Whales, and each
Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
The waters generated by thir kindes,
And every Bird of wing after his kinde,
And saw that it was good, and bless'd them, saying,
Be fruitful, multiply, and in the Seas
And Lakes and running Streams the waters fill,
And let the Fowle be multiply'd on the Earth
Forthwith the Sounds and Seas, each Creek and Bay
With Frie innumerable swarme, and Shoales
Of Fish that with thir Finns & Shining Scales
Glide under the green Wave, in Sculles that oft
Bank the mid Sea part single or with mate
Graze the Sea weed thir pasture & through Groves
Or Coral stray, or sporting with quick glance
Show to the Sun thir wav'd coats dropt with Gold,
Or in thir Pearlie shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment, or under Rocks thir food
In jointed Armour watch or smooth the Seale,
And bended Dolphins play part huge of bulk
Wallowing unweildie, enormous in thir Gate
Tempest the Ocean there Leviathan
Hugest of living Creatures, on the Deep
Stretcht like a Promontorie sleeps or swimmes,
And seems a moving Land, and at his Gilles
Draws in, and at his Trunck spouts out a Sea

CHARLES COTTON 1630 - 1687

from

WINTER

Hark, hark, I hear the North Wind roar,
See how he riots on the shoar!
And with expanded Wings out-stretch,
Ruffles the Billows on the beach

Hark, how the routed waves complain,
And call for succour to the Main,
Flying the Storm as if they meant
To creep into the Continent

Surely all Æol's huffing Brood^{*}
Are met to War against the Flood,
Which seems surpris'd, and has not yet
Had time his Levies to compleat

The beaten Barque, her rudder lost,
Is on the rowling Billows tost,
Her Keel now Plows the Ooze and soon
Her Top-Mast tilts against the Moon

'Tis strange! the Pilot keeps his seat,
His bounding Ship does so curvet,
Whilst the poor Passengers are found,
In their own fears already drown'd

Now Fins do serve for wings, and bear
Their Scaly Squadrons through the Air,
Whilst the Air's Inhabitants do stain
Their gaudy Plumage in the Main

Now Stars concealed in Clouds do peep
Into the secrets of the deep,
And lobsters, spued from the brine,
With Cancer's constellations shine

Sure Neptune's Wat'ry Kingdoms yet,
Since first their Corral Groves were wet,
Were ne'er disturb'd with such alarms,
Nor had such trial of their Arms

See where a Liquid Mountain rides,
Made up of innumerable Tides,
And tumbles headlong to the Strand,
As if the Sea would come to Land

A Sail! a Sail! I plainly spy
Betwixt the Ocean and the Sky
An Argosy, a tall built Ship,
With all her Pregnant Sails a-trip

Nearer, and nearer, she makes way,
With Canvas Wings, into the Bay,
And now upon the deck appears
A crowd of busy Mariners

Methinks I hear the Cordage crack,
With furrowing Neptune's foaming Back,
Who wounded, and revengeful roars
His Fury to the neighb'ring Shoars

With massy trident hugh, he heaves
Her sliding Keel above the Waves,
Opening his Liquid Arms to take
The bold invader in his wrack

See how she dives into his Chest,
Whilst raising up his floating Brest
To clasp her in, he makes her rise
Out of the reach of his surprise

Nearer she comes, and still doth sweep
The Azure Surface of the deep,
And now at last the Waves have thrown
Their Rider on our Albion

Under the Black cliff's spumy base
The Sea-sick Hulk her freight displays,
And as she walloweth on the Sand,
Vomits her burthen to the Land

With Heads erect, and plying Oar,
The Ship-wreck'd Mates make to the Shoar,
And dreadless of their danger, climb
The floating Mountains of the brine

Hark! hark! the noise their Ecchoes make
The Island's Silver Waves to shake,
Sure with these throws, the lab'ring man
'S delivered of a hurricane

And see the Seas becalm'd behind,
Not crispt with any breeze of Wind,
The Tempest has forsook the Waves,
And on Land begins his braves

Hark! hark! their Voices higher rise,
They tear the Welkin with their Cries,
The very Rocks their fury feel,
And like sick Drunkards nod and reel

Louder, and louder, still they come,
Nile's Cataracts to these are dumb,
The Cyclop to these Blades are still,
Whose Anvils shake the burning Hill

Were all the Star enlighten'd Skies,
As full of Ears as sparkling Eyes,
This rattle in the Chrystal Hall,
Would be enough to deaf them all

What monstrous Race is huther tost,
Thus to Alarm our British Coast,
'With Outcries such as never yet
War, or Confusion could beget

Oh! now I know them, let us home,
Our Mortal Enemy is come
Winter and all his blust'ring train
Have made a voyage o'er the Main

JOHN DRYDEN 1631 - 1700

from

ANNUS MIRABILIS

The Year of Wonders,

MDCLXVI

To see this Fleet upon the Ocean move,
Angels drew wide the Curtains of the Skies
And Heav'n, as if there wanted Lights above,
For Tapers made two glaring Comets rise

Whether they unctuous Exhalations are,
Fir'd by the Sun, or seeming so alone,
Or each some more remote and slippery Star,
Which loses footing when to Mortals shown

Or one that bright companion of the Sun,
Whose glorious aspect seal'd our new-born King,
And now, a round of greater years begun,
New influence from his walks of light did bring

Victorious *York* did first, with fam'd success,
To his known valour make the *Dutch* give place,
Thus Heav'n our Monarch's fortune did confess,
Beginning conquest from his Royal Race

But since it was decreed, Auspicious King,
In *Britann's* right that thou shouldst wed the Main,
Heav'n, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,
And therefore doom'd that *Lawson* should be slain

Lawson amongst the formost met his fate,
Whom Sea-green *Syrens* from the Rocks lament
Thus as an off'ring for the *Grecian* state,
He first was kill'd who first to Battel went

Their Chief blown up in air, not waves expir'd,
To which his pride presum'd to give the Law,
The *Dutch* confess'd Heav'n present and retir'd,
And all was *Britain* the wide Ocean saw

To nearest Ports their shatter'd Ships repair,
Where by our dreadful Canon they lay aw'd
So reverently Men quit the open air,
When Thunder speaks the angry Gods abroad

And now approach'd their Fleet from *India*, fraught
With all the riches of the rising Sun
And precious Sand from Southern Climates brought,
(The fatal Regions where the War begun)

Like hunted *Castors*, conscious of their Store,
Their way-laid wealth to *Norways* coasts they bring
There first the North's cold bosome spices bore,
And Winter brooded on the Eastern Spring

By the rich scent we found our perfum'd Prey,
Which flank'd with Rocks, did close in covert lie,
And round about their murdering Canon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the Eye

Fiercer than Canon, and than Rocks more hard,
The English undertake th' unequal War
Seven Ships alone, by which the Port is barr'd,
Besiege the *Indies*, and all *Denmark* dare

These fight like Husbands, but like Lovers those
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy
And to such height their frantick Passion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to destroy

Amidst whole heaps of Spices lights a Ball,
And now their Odours arm'd against them flie
Some preciously by shatter'd Porc'lain fall,
And some by Aromatick Splinters die

And though by Tempests of the Prize bereft,
In Heavens inclemency some ease we find,
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the Seas and Wind

Nor wholly lost we so deserv'd a prey,
For storms, repenting, part of it restor'd
Which, as a tribute from the Baltick Sea,
The British Ocean sent her mighty Lord

Our Fleet divides, and straight the *Dutch* appear,
In number, and a fam'd Commander, bold
The Narrow Seas can scarce their Navy bear
Or crowded Vessels can their Soldiers hold

The Duke, less numerous, but in Courage more,
On wings of all the winds to Combat flies,
His murdering Guns a loud Defiance roar,
And bloody Crosses on his Flag-staffs rise

Both furl their Sails, and strip them for the Fight,
Their folded Sheets dismiss the useless Air,
Th' *Elean* plains could boast no nobler sight,
When struggling Champions did their Bodies bare

Born each by other in a distant Line,
The Sea-built Forts in dreadful order move
So vast the noise, as if not Fleets did join,
But lands unfixt, and floating Nations strove

Now pass'd, on either side they numbly tack,
Both strive to intercept and guide the wind
And, in its eye, more closely they come back,
To finish all the Deaths they left behind

On high-raiſ'd Decks the haughty *Belgians* ride,
Beneath whose ſhade our humble Frigats go
Such port the *Elephant* bears, and ſo defi'd
By the *Rhinocero's* her unequal foe

And as the Built, ſo different is the Fight,
Their mounting Shot is on our Sails deſign'd
Deep in their Hulls our deadly Bullets light,
And through the yielding Planks a paſſage find

Our dreaded Admiral from far they threat,
Whoſe batter'd Rigging their whole war receives,
All bare, like ſome old Oak which Tempeſts beat,
He ſtands, and ſees below his ſcatter'd leaves

Heroes of old, when wounded, Shelter ſought,
But he, who meets all Danger with diſdain,
Ev'n in their Face his Ship to Anchor brought,
And Steeple-high ſtood propt upon the Main

At this exceſs of Courage all amaz'd,
The foremoſt of his Foes a while withdraw
With ſuch reſpect in enter'd *Rome* they gaz'd,
Who on high Chairs the God-like Fathers ſaw

And now, as where *Patroclus* Body lay,
Here *Trojan* Chiefs advanc'd, and there the *Greek*
Ours o're the Duke their pious wings diſplay,
And theirs the nobleſt Spoils of *Britain* ſeek

Mean time his buſie Mariners he haſts,
His ſhatter'd Sails with Rigging to reſtore,
And willing Pines aſcend his broken Maſts,
Whoſe lofty heads riſe higher than before

Streight to the *Dutch* he turns his dreadful Prow,
More fierce th' important Quarrel to decide
Like Swans, in long array his veſſels ſhew,
Whoſe creasts, advancing, do the waves divide

They charge, recharge, and all along the Sea
They drive, and squander the huge *Belgian* Fleet,
Berkley alone, who nearest Danger lay,
Did a like Fate with lost *Creusa* meet

The night comes on, we eager to persue
The Combat still, and they asham'd to leave
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful Moon-light did our rage deceive

In th' *English* fleet each Ship resounds with Joy,
And loud applause of their great Leader's Fame
In fiery dreams the *Dutch* they still destroy,
And slumbring, smile at the imagin'd Flame

Not so the *Holland* fleet, who tired and done,
Stretch'd on their Decks like weary Oxen lie
Faint Sweats all down their mighty Members run,
(Vast bulks which little Souls but ill supply)

In Dreams they fearful Precipices tread
Or, shipwrack'd, labour to some distant shore,
Or in dark Churches walk among the Dead,
They wake with horror and dare sleep no more

Amidst these Toils succeeds the balmy night,
Now hissing waters the quench'd Guns restore,
And weary waves, withdrawing from the Fight,
Lie lull'd and panting on the silent Shore

The Moon shone clear on the becalmed fload,
Where, while her beams like glittering silver play,
Upon the Deck our careful General stood,
And deeply mus'd on the succeeding day

That happy Sun, said he, will rise again,
Who twice victorious did our Navy see
And I alone must view him rise in vain,
Without one ray of all his Star for me

Yet like an *English* Gen'ral will I die,
And all the Ocean make my spacious grave
Women and Cowards on the Land may lie,
The Sea's a Tomb that's proper for the Brave

Restless he pass'd the remnants of the Night,
Till the fresh Air proclaim'd the Morning nigh
And burning Ships, the Martyrs of the Fight,
With paler fires beheld the Eastern sky

But now, his Stores of Ammunition spent,
His naked Valour is his only guard,
Rare Thunders are from his dumb Cannon sent,
And solitary Guns are scarcely heard

Thus far had Fortune pow'r, here forc'd to stay,
Nor longer durst with Virtue be at strife
This, as a Ransom, *Albemarle* did pay
For all the Glories of so great a Life

For now brave *Rupert* from afar appears,
Whose waving Streamers the glad General knows
With full-spread Sails his eager Navy steers,
And every Ship in swift proportion grows

The *Dutch*, who came like greedy Hinds before,
To reap the harvest their ripe Ears did yield,
Now look like those, when rowling Thunders roar,
And sheets of Lightning blast the standing Field

Full in the Princes Passage, hills of Sand
And dang'rous Flats in secret Ambush lay,
Where the false tides skim o'er the cover'd Land,
And Sea-men with dissembled Depths betray

The wily *Dutch*, who, like fall'n-Angels, fear'd
This new *Messiah's* coming, there did wait,
And round the verge their braving Vessels steer'd,
To tempt his Courage with so fair a Bait

But he, unmov'd, contemns their idle threat,
Secure of fame when e're he please to fight
His cold Experience tempers all his heat,
And inbred worth doth boasting Valour slight

In burden'd Vessels first, with speedy care,
His plenteous Stores do season'd Timber send
Thither the brawny Carpenters repair,
And as the Surgeons of maim'd Ships attend

With Cord and Canvass from rich *Hamburgh* sent,
His Navies molted wings he imps once more,
Tall *Norway* Fir, their Masts in Battel spent,
And *English* Oak sprung Leaks and Planks restore

All hands employ'd the Royal work grows warm
Like labouring Bees on a long Summers day,
Some sound the Trumpet for the rest to swarm,
And some on bells of tasted Lillies play

With glewy wax some new Foundations lay
Of Virgin-combs, which from the Roof are hung,
Some arm'd within doors, upon Duty stay
Or tend the Sick, or educate the Young

So here some pick out Bullets from the side,
Some drive old Okum through each Seam and Rift
Their left-hand does the Calking-iron guide,
The ratling Mallet with the right they lift

With boiling Pitch another near at hand,
(From friendly *Sweden* brought) the seams instops
Which well paid o'r, the salt-Sea waves withstand,
And shake them from the rising Beak in drops.

Some the gall'd Ropes with dawby Marling bind,
Or sear-cloth Masts with strong Tarpawling coats
To try new Shrouds one mounts into the wind,
And one, below, their Ease or Stiffness notes

Our careful Monarch stands in Person by,
His new-cast Cannons Firmness to explore
The strength of big-corn'd Powder loves to try,
And ball and Cartrage sorts for every bore

Each day brings fresh supplies of Arms and Men,
And Ships which all last Winter were abroad
And such as fitted since the Fight had been,
Or new from Stocks were fall'n into Road

The goodly *London* in her gallant Trim,
(The *Phoenix* daughter of the vanish'd old)
Like a rich Bride does to the *Ocean* swim,
And on her shadow rides in Floating-gold

Her Flag aloft spread ruffling to the Wind,
And sanguine Streamers seem the Floud to fire
The Weaver charm'd with what his Loom design'd,
Goes on to Sea, and knows not to retire

With roomy Decks, her Guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid Mouths each mounting Billow laves
Deep in her Draught, and warlike in her Length,
She seems a Sea-wasp flying on the Waves

This martial Present, piously design'd,
The Loyal City give their best-lov'd King
And with a Bounty ample as the wind,
BUILT, fitted and maintain'd to aid him bring

By viewing Nature, Nature's Hand-maid Art
Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow
Thus Fishes first to Shipping did impart,
Their Tail the Rudder, and their Head the Prow

Some Log, perhaps, upon the waters swam,
An useless drift, which rudely cut within,
And, hollow'd, first a floating Trough became
And cross some Riv'let Passage did begin

In shipping such as this, the *Irish Kern*,
And untaught *Indian*, on the Stream did glide
Ere sharp-keel'd Boats to stem the Floud did learn,
Or fin-like Oars did spread from either side

Add but a sail, and *Saturn* so appear'd,
When from lost Empire he to Exile went,
And with the Golden age to *Tyber* steer'd,
Where Coin and first Commerce he did invent

Rude as their Ships was Navigation, then,
No useful Compass or Meridian known,
Coasting, they kept the Land within their ken,
And knew no North but when the Pole-star shone

Of all who since have used the open Sea,
Than the bold *English* none more Fame have won,
Beyond the Year, and out of Heav'n's high-way,
They make discoveries where they see no Sun

But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,
By poor man-kinds benighted Wit is sought,
Shall in this Age to *Britain* first be shewn,
And hence be to admiring Nations taught

The Ebbs of Tides and their mysterious Flow,
We, as Arts Elements shall understand,
And as by Line upon the Ocean go,
Whose Paths shall be familiar as the Land

Instructed ships shall sail to quick Commerce,
By which remotest Regions are all'd,
Which makes one City of the Universe,
Where some may gain, and all may be suppl'd

Then we upon our Globes last verge shall go,
And view the Ocean leaning on the Sky
From thence our rolling Neighbours we shall know,
And on the Lunar world securely pry

This I fore-tel from your auspicious Care,
Who great in search of God and Nature grow,
Who best your wise Creator's Praise declare,
Since best to praise his works is best to know

Now Anchors weigh'd, the Sea-men shout so shrill,
That Heav'n, and Earth, and the wide Ocean rings
A Breeze from Westward waits their Sails to fill,
And rests, in those high beds, his downy Wings

The wary *Dutch* this gathering storm foresaw,
And durst not bide it on the *English*-coast
Behind their treacherous Shallows they withdraw,
And there lay Snares to catch the *British* Host

So the false Spider, when her Nets are spread,
Deep ambush'd in her silent Den does lie
And feels, far off, the trembling of her thread,
Whose filmy Cord should bind the struggling Fly

Then, if at last she find him fast beset,
She issues forth, and runs along her Loom
She joys to touch the Captive in her Net,
And drag the little Wretch in triumph home

The *Belgians* hop'd that, with disorder'd haste,
Our deep-cut Keels upon the Sands might run
Or, if with caution leisurely were past,
Their numerous Gross might charge us one by one

But with a Fore-wind pushing them above,
And swelling Tide that heav'd them from below,
O'er the blind Flats our warlike Squadrons move,
And, with spread Sails, to welcom Battel go

It seem'd as there the *British Neptune* stood,
With all his hosts of Waters at Command,
Beneath them to submit th' officious Floud,
And, with his Trident, shov'd them off the Sand

To the pale Foes they suddenly draw near,
And summon them to unexpected Fight,
They start like Murderers when Ghosts appear,
And draw their Curtains in the dead of night

Now Van to Van the foremost Squadrons meet,
The midmost Battels hastning up behind
Who view, far off, the storm of falling Sleet,
And hear their Thunder ratling in the wind

At length the adverse Admirals appear,
(The two bold Champions of each Countries right)
Their Eyes describe the lists as they come near,
And draw the lines of Death before they fight

The distance judg'd for Shot of every size,
The Linstocks touch, the pond'rous Ball expires
The vigorous Sea-man every Port-hole plies,
And adds his heart to every Gun he fires

Fierce was the Fight on the proud *Belgians* side,
For Honour, which they seldom sought before
But now they by their own vain Boasts were tri'd
And forc'd, at least in show, to prize it more

But sharp remembrance on the *English* part
And shame of being match'd by such a Foe,
Rouze conscious Virtue up in every heart,
And seeming to be stronger makes them so

Nor long the *Belgians* could that Fleet sustain,
Which did two Gen'ral's fates, and *Caesar's* bear
Each several Ship a Victory did gain,
As *Rupert* or as *Albemarle* were there

Their batter'd Admiral too soon withdrew,
Unthank'd by ours for his unfinish'd Fight,
But he the Minds of his *Dutch* Masters knew,
Who call'd that providence which we call'd flight

Never did Men more joyfully obey,
Or sooner understood the sign to flee
With such alacrity they bore away,
As if to praise them All the States stood by

O famous leader of the *Belgian* fleet,
Thy Monument inscrib'd such praise shall wear,
As *Varro* timely flying once did meet,
Because he did not of his *Rome* despair

Behold that Navy, which a while before
Provok'd the tardy *English* close to Fight,
Now draw their beaten Vessels close to shore,
As Larks lie dar'd to shun the Hobbies flight

JONATHAN SWIFT 1667 - 1745

AT HOLYHEAD

O Neptune! Neptune! must I still
Be here detained against my will ?
Is this your justice when I'm come
Above two hundred miles from home ?
O'er mountains steep, o'er dusty plains,
Half choaked with dust, half drowned with rains,
Only your Godship to implore
To let me kiss your other shore ?
A boon so small! but I may weep
While you're, like Baal, fast asleep

EDWARD YOUNG 1684 - 1765

from
OCEAN
AN ODE

Sweet rural scene
Of flocks and green!
At careless ease my limbs are spread
All nature still,
But yonder rill,
And list'ning pines nod o'er my head

In prospect wide,
The boundless tide!
Waves cease to foam, and winds to roar
Without a breeze,
The curling seas
Dance on, in measure, to the shore

When tempests cease,
And, hush'd in peace,
The flatten'd surges, smoothly spread,
Deep silence keep,
And seem to sleep
Recumbent on their oozy bed,

With what a trance,
The level glance,
Unbroken, shoots along the seas!
Which tempt from shore
The painted oar,
And every canvass courts the breeze!

When rushes forth
The frowning North
On black'ning billows, with what dread

My shudd'ring soul
Beholds them roll,
And hears their roarings o'er my head!

With terror, mark
Yon flying bark!
Now centre-deep descend the brave,
Now, toss'd on high
It takes the sky
A feather on the tow'ring wave!

Now spins around
In whirls profound,
Now overwhelm'd, now pendent near the clouds,
Now stunned, it reels
'Midst thunder's peals,
And now fierce lightening fires the shrouds

All ether burns
Chaos returns,
And blends, once more, the seas and skies
No space between
Thy bosom green,
O deep! and the blue concave, lies

The northern blast,
The shatter'd mast,
The syrt, the whirlpool, and the rock,
The breaking spout,
The stars gone out,
The boiling strait, the monster's shock

There, set in green,
Gold-stars are seen,
A mantle rich! thy charms to wrap,
And when the sun
His race has run,
He falls enamour'd in thy lap

Those clouds, whose dyes
Adorn the skies,
That silver snow, that pearly rain,
Has Phoebus stole
To grace the pole,
The plunder of th' invaded main

The gaudy bow
Whose colours glow,
Whose arch with so much skill is bent,
To Phoebus' ray,
Which paints so gay,
By thee the wat'ry woof was lent

In chambers deep,
Where waters sleep,
What unknown treasures pave the floor!
The pearl in rows
Pale lustre throws,
The wealth immense, which storms devour

From Indian mines,
With proud designs,
The merchant, swoln, digs golden ore
The tempests rise,
And seize the prize,
And toss him breathless on the shore .

Thou wat'ry vast!
What mounds are cast
To bar thy dreadful flowings o'er!
Thy proudest foam
Must know its home,
But rage of gold disdains a shore . .

A voice has flown
From Britain's throne,
To re-inflame a grand design

That voice shall rear
Yon* fabric fair,
As nature's rose at the Divine

When Nature sprung,
Blest angels sung,
And shouted o'er the rising ball
For strains as high
As man's can fly,
The sea-devoted honours call

From boist'rous seas,
The lap of ease
Receives our wounded and our old
High domes ascend
Stretch'd arches bend
Proud columns swell wide gates unfold

Here, soft recln'd,
From wave, from wind,
And fortune's tempest, safe ashore,
To cheat their care,
Of former war
They talk the pleasing shadows o'er

With spiral shell,
Full-blasted tell,
That all your wat'ry realms should ring
Your pearl alcoves,
Your coral groves,
Should echo theirs and Britain's king

As long as stars
Guide mariners,
As Carolina's virtues please,
Or suns invite
The ravish'd sight,
The British flag shall sweep the seas

'A Fund for Greenwich Hospital, recommended from the throne

JAMES THOMSON 1700 - 1748

from

THE SEASONS

Autumn

Or where the Northern Ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked melancholy isles
Of farthest Thulé, and th' Atlantic surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides,
Who can recount what transmigrations there
Are annual made? what nations come and go?
And how the living clouds on clouds arise—
Infinite wings! — till all the plume-dark air
And rude-resounding shore are one wild cry?

Here the plain harmless native his small flock,
And herd diminutive of many hues,
Tends on the little island's verdant swell,
The shepherd's sea-girt reign, or, to the rocks
Dire-clinging, gathers his ovarious food,
Or sweeps the fishy shore, or treasures up
The plumage, rising full, to form the bed
Of luxury And here a while the Muse,
High hovering o'er the broad cerulean scene,
Sees Caledonia, in romantic view
Her airy mountains, from the waving main,
Invested with a keen diffusive sky,
Breathing the soul acute, her forests huge,
Incult, robust, and tall, by Nature's hand
Planted of old, her azure lakes between,
Pour'd out extensive, and of watery wealth
Full, winding deep and green, her fertile vales,
With many a cool, translucent, brimming flood
Wash'd lovely, from the Tweed (*pure parent-stream*),
Whose pastoral banks first heard my Doric reed,
With, sylvan Jed, thy tributary brook)
To where the north-inflated tempest foams
O'er Orca's or Berubium's highest peak

JAMES THOMSON 1700 - 1748

from

THE SEASONS

Winter

Thence winding eastward to the Tartar's coast,
She sweeps the howling margin of the main,
Where, undissolving, from the first of time,
Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky,
And icy mountains high, on mountains piled,
Seemed to the shivering sailor from afar,
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds
Projected huge and horrid o'er the surge,
Alps frown on Alps, or, rushing hideous down,
As if old Chaos was again return'd,
Wide rend the deep, and shake the solid Pole
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury, but, in all its rage
Of tempest taken by the boundless frost,
Is many a fathom to the bottom chain'd,
And bid to roar no more a bleak expanse,
Shagg'd o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless, and void
Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies conscious southward Miserable they,
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun,
While, full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
The long, long night, incumbent o'er their heads,
Falls horrible! Such was the Briton's fate,
As with first prow (what have not Britons dared ?)
He for the passage sought, attempted since
So much in vain, and seeming to be shut
By jealous Nature with eternal bars
In these fell regions, in Arzina caught,
And to the stony deep his idle ship
Immediate seal'd, he with his hapless crew,
Each full exerted at his several task,

Froze into statues, to the cordage glued
The sailor, and the pilot to the helm

Sudden from the hills,
O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once,
And, where they rush, the wide-resounding plain
Is left one slimy waste Those sullen seas,
That wash'd th' ungenial Pole, will rest no more
Beneath the shackles of the mighty North,
But, rousing all their waves, resistless heave
And, hark! the lengthening roar continuous runs
Athwart the rifted deep at once it bursts,
And piles a thousand mountains to the clouds
Ill fares the bark, with trembling wretches charged,
That, toss'd amid the floating fragments, moors
Beneath the shelter of an icy isle,
While night o'erwhelms the sea, and horrid looks
More horrible Can human force endure
Th' assembled mischiefs that besiege them round ?—
Heart-gnawing hunger, fainting weariness,
The roar of winds and waves, the crush of ice,
Now ceasing, now renew'd with louder rage,
And in dire echoes bellowing round the main,
More to embroil the deep, Leviathan
And his unwieldy train, in dreadful sport,
Tempest the loosen'd brine, while through the gloom,
Far from the bleak inhospitable shore,
Loading the winds, is heard the hungry howl
Of famish'd monsters, there awaiting wrecks .

JOHN DYER c 1700 - 1758

from

THE FLEECE Book IV

'Tis a tedious course
By the Antarctic circle nor beyond
Those sea-wrapt gardens of the dulcet reed,
Bahama and Caribbee, may be found
Safe mole or harbour, till on Falkland's isle
The standard of Britannia shall arise
Proud Buenos Aires, low-couched Paraguay,
And rough Corrientes, mark, with hostile eye,
The lab'ring vessel neither may we trust
The dreary naked Patagonian land,
Which darkens in the wind No traffick there,
No barter for the fleece There angry storms
Bend their black brows, and, raging, hurl around
Their thunders Ye advent'rous mariners,
Be firm, take courage from the brave 'T was there
Perils and conflicts inexpressible
Anson, with steady undespairing breast,
Endur'd, when o'er the various globe he chas'd
His country's foes Fast-gath'ring tempests rous'd
Huge ocean, and involv'd him all around
Whirlwind, and snow, and hail, and horror now,
Rapidly, with the world of waters, down
Descending to the channels of the deep,
He view'd th' uncover'd bottom of th' abyss,
And now the stars, upon the loftiest point
Toss'd of the sky-mix'd surges Oft the burst
Of loudest thunder, with the dash of seas,
Tore the wild-flying sails and tumbling masts,
While flames, thick-flashing in the gloom, reveal'd
Ruins of decks and shrouds, and sights of death
Yet on he far'd, with fortitude his chear,
Gaining, at intervals, slow way beneath
Del Fuego's rugged cliffs, and the white ridge,
Above all height, by op'ning clouds reveal'd,

Of Montegorda, and inaccessible
Wreck-threat'ning Staten-land's o'er-hanging shore,
Enormous rocks on rocks, in ever-wild
Posture of falling, as when Pelion, rear'd
On Ossa, and on Ossa's tott'ring head
Woody Olympus, by the angry gods
Precipitate on earth were doom'd to fall

At length, through ev'ry tempest, as some branch,
Which from a poplar falls into a loud
Impetuous cataract, though deep immers'd,
Yet reascends, and glides, on lake or stream,
Smooth through the vallies, so his way he won
To the serene Pacific, flood immense,
And rear'd his lofty masts, and spread his sails

•
WILLIAM COWPER 1731 - 1800

RAMSGATE

*To the Rev Mr Newton
on his return from Ramsgate*

That ocean you of late survey'd,
Those rocks I too have seen,
But I afflicted and dismay'd,
You, tranquil and serene

You from the flood-controlling steep
Saw stretch'd before your view,
With conscious joy, the threat'ning, deep
No longer such to you

To me the waves that ceaseless broke
Upon the dang'rous coast
Hoarsely and ominously spoke
Of all my treasure lost

Your sea of troubles you have past,
And found the peaceful shore,
I, tempest-toss'd, and wreck'd at last,
Come home to port no more

WILLIAM FALCONER 1732 - 1769

from

THE SHIPWRECK

All hands unmoor' proclaims a boisterous cry
All hands unmoor' the cavern'd rocks reply!
Rous'd from repose, aloft the Sailors swarm,
And with their levers soon the Windlass arm
The order given, up-springing with a bound,
They lodge the bars, and wheel their Engine round,
At every turn the clanging pauls resound
Uptorn reluctant from its oozy Cave,
The ponderous Anchor rises o'er the wave
Along their slippery Masts the yards ascend,
And high in air the canvas wings extend
Redoubling cords the lofty canvas guide,
And through inextricable mazes glide
The lunar rays with long reflection gleam,
To light the vessel o'er the silver stream
Along the glassy plain serene she glides,
While azure radiance trembles on her sides
From east to north the transient breezes play,
And in th' *Egyptian* quarter soon decay
A Calm ensues, they dread th' adjacent Shore,
The Boats with rowers man'd are sent before
With cordage fasten'd to the lofty prow,
Aloof to sea the stately Ship they tow
The nervous Crew their sweeping oars extend,
And pealing shouts the shore of *Candia* rend
Success attends their Skill, the danger's o'er
The Port is doubled and beheld no more .

from

THE BOROUGH

General Description

Turn to the watery world! — but who to thee
 (A wonder yet unview'd) shall paint — the sea ?
 Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,
 When lull'd by zephyrs, or when roused by storms,
 Its colours changing, when from clouds and sun
 Shades after shades upon the surface run,
 Embrown'd and horrid now, and now serene,
 In limpid blue, and evanescent green,
 And oft the foggy banks on ocean lie,
 Lift the fair sail, and cheat th' experienced eye

Be it the summer-noon a sandy space
 The ebbing tide has left upon its place,
 Then just the hot and stony beach above,
 Light twinkling streams in bright confusion move,
 (For heated thus, the warmer air ascends,
 And with the cooler in its fall contends)—
 Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
 An equal motion, swelling as it sleeps,
 Then slowly sinking; curling to the strand,
 Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,
 Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
 And back return in silence, smooth and slow
 Ships in the calm seem anchor'd, for they glide
 On the still sea, urged solely by the tide,
 Art thou not present, this calm scene before,
 Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,
 And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more ?

Yet sometimes comes a ruffling cloud to make
 The quiet surface of the ocean shake,
 As an awaken'd giant with a frown
 Might show his wrath, and then to sleep sink down
 View now the winter-storm! above, one cloud,

Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud,
Th' unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had roll'd in view of boding men on shore,
And sometimes hid and sometimes show'd his form,
Dark as the cloud, and furious as the storm

All where the eye delights, yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising — all the deep
Is restless change, the waves so swell'd and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase,
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch,
Curl'd as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then re-flowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Roll'd by their rage, and shall to ages last

Far off the petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray,
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main

High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flights of wild-ducks stretch,
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide,
All in their wedge-like figures from the north,
Day after day, flight after flight, go forth

In-shore their passage tribes of sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge,
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly
Far back, then turn, and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry,
Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest

Darkness begins to reign; the louder wind
Appals the weak and awes the firmer mind,

But frights not him, whom evening and the spray
In part conceal — yon prowler on his way
Lo! he has something seen, he runs apace,
As if he fear'd companion in the chase,
He sees his prize, and now he turns again,
Slowly and sorrowing — “Was your search in vain?”
Gruffly he answers, “ ’Tis a sorry sight!
“A seaman’s body there’ll be more to-night!”

Hark! to those sounds! they’re from distress at sea
How quick they come! What terrors may there be!
Yes, ’tis a driven vessel I discern
Lights, signs of terror, gleaming from the stern,
Others behold them too, and from the town
In various parties seamen hurry down,
Their wives pursue, and damsels urged by dread,
Lest men so dear be into danger led,
Their head the gown has hooded, and their call
In this sad night is piercing like the squall,
They feel their kinds of power, and when they meet,
Chide, fondle, weep, dare, threaten, or entreat
See one poor girl, all terror and alarm,
Has fondly seized upon her lover’s arm,

“Thou shalt not venture”, and he answers “No!
“I will not” — still she cries, “Thou shalt not go”

No need of this, not here the stoutest boat
Can through such breakers, o’er such billows float,
Yet may they view these lights upon the beach,
Which yield them hope, whom help can never reach

From parted clouds the moon her radiance throws
On the wild waves, and all the danger shows,
But shows them beaming in her shining vest,
Terrific splendour! gloom in glory dress’d!
This for a moment, and then clouds again
Hide every beam, and fear and darkness reign

But hear we now those sounds? Do lights appear?
I see them not! the storm alone I hear
And lo! the sailors homeward take their way,
Man must endure — let us submit and pray

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GEORGE CRABBE 1754 - 1832

from

TALES OF THE HALL

Adventures of Richard

“ I loved to walk where none had walk’d before,
“ About the rocks that ran along the shore,
“ Or far beyond the sight of men to stray,
“ And take my pleasure when I lost my way,
“ For then ’twas mine to trace the hilly heath,
“ And all the mossy moor that lies beneath
“ Here had I favourite stations, where I stood
“ And heard the murmurs of the ocean-flood,
“ With not a sound beside, except when flew
“ Aloft the lapwing, or the gray curlew,
“ Who with wild notes my fancied power defied,
“ And mock’d the dreams of solitary pride
“ I loved to stop at every creek and bay
“ Made by the river in its winding way,
“ And call to memory — not by marks they bare,
“ But by the thoughts that were created there
“ Pleasant it was to view the sea-gulls strive
“ Against the storm, or in the ocean dive,
“ With eager scream, or when they dropping gave
“ Their closing wings to sail upon the wave
“ Then as the winds and waters raged around,
“ And breaking billows mix’d their deafening sound,
“ They on the rolling deep securely hung,
“ And calmly rode the restless waves among
“ Nor pleased it less around me to behold,
“ Far up the beach, the yesty sea-foam roll’d,
“ Or from the shore upborn, to see on high,
“ Its frothy flakes in wild confusion fly
“ While the salt spray that clashing billows form,
“ Gave to the taste a feeling of the storm ”

WILLIAM BLAKE 1757 - 1827

from

A LETTER TO THOMAS BUTTS

Felpham, October 2nd, 1800

To my Friend Butts I write
My first Vision of Light,
On the yellow sands sitting
The Sun was Emitting
His Glorious beams
From Heaven's High Streams
Over Sea, over Land
My Eyes did Expand
Into regions of air
Away from all Care,
Into regions of fire
Remote from Desire,
The Light of the Morning
Heaven's Mountains adorning
In particles bright
The jewels of Light
Distinct shone & clear
Amaz'd and in fear
I each particle gazed,
Astonish'd, Amazed,
For each was a Man
Human-form'd Swift I ran,
For they beckon'd to me
Remote by the Sea,
Saying "Each grain of Sand,
' Every Stone on the Land,
"Each rock & each hill,
"Each fountain & rill,
"Each herb & each tree,
"Mountain, hill, earth & sea,
"Cloud, Meteor & Star,
"Are Men seen Afar "

I stood in the Streams
Of Heaven's bright beams,
And saw Felpham sweet
Beneath my bright feet
In soft Female charms,
And in her fair arms
My Shadow I knew
And my wife's shadow too,
And My sister & Friend
We like Infants descend
In our Shadows on Earth,
Like a weak mortal birth
My Eyes more and more
Like a Sea without shore
Continue Expanding,
The Heavens commanding,
Till the Jewels of Light,
Heavenly Men beaming bright,
Appear'd as One Man,
Who complacent began
My limbs to unfold
In his beams of bright gold,
Like dross purg'd away
All my mire & my clay,
Soft consum'd in delight
In his bosom Sun bright
I remain'd Soft he smil'd,
And I heard his voice Mild
Saying "This is My Fold,
"O thou Ram horn'd with gold,
"Who awakest from Sleep
"On the Sides of the Deep
"On the Mountains around
"The roarings resound
"Of the lion & wolf,
"The loud Sea & deep gulf
"These are guards of My Fold,
"O thou Ram horn'd with gold!"

And the voice faded mild
I remain'd as a Child,
All I ever had known
Before me bright Shone
I saw you & your wife
By the fountains of Life
Such the Vision to me
Appear'd on the sea

WILLIAM HOLLOWAY fl 1803

from

SCENES OF YOUTH

Yon, the tall May-pole rear'd upon the beach,
Invites the villagers, from the green hills
The fresh flow'rs breathe, and all the outspread main
Is gently brush'd by the descending breeze,
While up the slope the constant billows turn
Soft rushing sands, that shift along the shore,
With soothing murmur on the list'ning ear
Such, *Portland*, is the scene thy steepy cliffs
O'erlook, while all thy hardy sons around,
Spread their black nets upon the sunny ridge,
Whence many a boat at intervals is launch'd,
And wing'd with oars when v-mack'rel shoals arrive,
Dark'ning the deep, the sein ers shoot away,
And while, in ample curve, they sweep the flood,
Labour, and gain, and pastime, all unite

'Tis holiday — and e'en the village school
Pours out its little inmates, noisy, wild
Some seek the covert of the flow'ring furze,
Where crimson-breasted linnets, twitt'ring, range,
Others, intent, around the bramble brake,
Pluck blackberries ripe, to stain their sunburnt cheeks,
Or, idling, stretch them on the arid soil,
Where scatter'd mole-hills, blue with scented thyme,
Diversify the scene

WILLIAM SOTHEY 1757 - 1833

CROSSING THE ANGLESEA STRAIT
BANGOR AT MIDNIGHT

'Twas midnight! from the Druid's gloomy cave,
Where I had wander'd, tranc'd in thought, alone
Mid Cromlechs, and the Carnedd's funeral stone,
Pensive and slow, I sought the Menai's wave
Lull'd by the scene, a soothing stillness laid
My soul to rest O'er Snowdon's cloudless brow
The moon, that full-orbed rose, with peaceful glow,
Beam'd on the rocks, with many a star array'd,
Glitter'd the broad blue sky, from shore to shore,
O'er the smooth current streamed a silver light,
Save where along the flood the lonely height
Of rocky Penmanmaur deep darkness shed,
And all was silence, save the ceaseless roar
Of Conway bursting on the ocean's bed

WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES 1762 - 1850

from

ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT

While summer airs scarce breathe along the tide,
Oft pausing, up the mountain's craggy side
We climb, how beautiful, how still, how clear,
The scenes that stretch around! The rocks that rear
Their shapes, in rich fantastic colours dressed,
The hill-tops, where the softest shadows rest,
The long-retiring bay, the level sand,
The fading sea-line and the furthest land,
That seems, as low it lessens from the eye,
To steal away beneath the cloudless sky!

But yesterday, the misty morn was spread
In dreariness on the bleak mountain's head,
No glittering prospect from the upland smiled,
The driving squall came dark, the sea heaved wild,

And, lost and lonely, the wayfarer sighed,
Wet with the hoar spray of the flashing tide
How changed is now the circling scene! The deep
Stirs not, the glancing roofs and white towers peep
Along the margin of the lucid bay,
The sails, descried far in the offing gray,
Hang motionless, and the pale headland's height
Is touched as with sweet gleams of fairy light!

O, lives there on earth's busy-stirring scene,
Whom Nature's tranquil charms, her airs serene,
Her seas, her skies, her sunbeams, fail to move
With stealing tenderness and grateful love!
Go, thankless man, to Misery's cave, — behold
Captivity, stretched in her dungeon cold!
Or think of those who, in yon dreary mine,
Sunk fathoms deep beneath the rolling brine,
From year to year amid the lurid shade,
O'er-wearied ply their melancholy trade,
That thou may'st bless the glorious sun, and hail
Him who with beauty clothed the hill and vale,
Who bent the arch of the high heavens for thee,
And stretched in amplitude the broad blue sea!
Now sunk are all its murmurs, and the air
But moves by fits the bents that here and there
Upshoot in casual spots of faded green
Here straggling sheep the scanty pasture glean,
Or on the jutting fragments that impend,
Stray fearlessly, and gaze as we ascend

Mountain, no pomp of waving woods hast thou,
That deck with varied shade thy hoary brow,
No sunny meadows at thy feet are spread,
No streamlets sparkle o'er their pebbly bed!
But thou canst boast thy beauties ample views
That catch the rapt eye of the pausing Muse,
Headlands around new-lighted, sails and seas,
Now glassy smooth, now wrinkling to the breeze,
And when the drisly Winter, wrapped in sleet,
Goes by, and winds and rain thy ramparts beat,

Fancy can see thee standing thus aloof,
And frowning, bleak, and bare, and tempest-proof,
Look as with awful confidence, and brave
The howling hurricane, the dashing wave,
More graceful when the storm's dark vapours frown
Than when the summer suns in pomp go down!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH 1770 - 1850

BY THE SEA-SHORE, ISLE OF MAN

Why stand we gazing on the sparkling Brine,
With wonder smit by its transparency,
And all-enraptured with its purity?—
Because the unstained, the clear, the crystalline
Have ever in them something of benign,
Whether in gem, in water, or in sky,
A sleeping infant's brow, or wakeful eye
Of a young maiden, only not divine
Scarcely the hand forbears to dip its palm
For beverage drawn as from a mountain well
Temptation centres in the liquid Calm,
Our daily raiment seems no obstacle
To instantaneous plunging in, deep Sea!
And revelling in long embrace with thee

JAMES MONTGOMERY 1771 - 1854

A SEA PIECE

Scene — Bridlington Quay, 1824

At nightfall, walking on the cliff-crowned shore,
Where sea and sky were in each other lost,
Dark ships were scudding through the wild uproar
Whose wrecks ere morn must strew the dreary coast,
I marked one well-moored vessel tempest-tosst,

Sails reefed, helm lashed, a dreadful siege she bore,
Her deck by billow after billow crossed,
While every moment she might be no more
Yet firmly anchored on the nether sand,
Like a chained lion ramping at his foes,
Forward and rearward still she plunged and rose,
Till broke her cable, then she fled to land,
With all the waves in chase, throes following throes,
She 'scaped, — she struck, — she stood upon the strand

The morn was beautiful, the storm gone by,
Three days had passed, I saw the peaceful main,
One molten mirror, one illumined plane,
Clear as the blue, sublime, o'erarching sky,
On shore that lonely vessel caught mine eye,
Her bow was seaward, all equipt her train,
Yet to the sun she spread her wings in vain,
Like a caged eagle, impotent to fly,
There fixed as if for ever to abide,
Far down the beach had rolled the low neap-tide,
Whose mingling murmur faintly lulled the ear
"Is this," methought, — "is this the doom of pride,
Checked in the onset of thy brave career,
Ingloriously to rot by piecemeal here?"

Spring-tides returned, and Fortune smiled, the bay
Received the rushing ocean to its breast,
While waves on waves innumerably prest,
Seemed, with the prancing of their proud array,
Sea-horses, flashed with foam, and snorting spray,
Their power and thunder broke that vessel's rest,
Slowly, with new expanding life possest,
To her own element she glid away,
Buoyant and bounding like the polar whale,
That takes his pastime, every joyful sail
Was to the freedom of the wind unfurled,
While right and left the parted surges curled,
— Go, gallant bark! with such a tide and gale,
I'll pledge thee to a voyage round the world

from

LINES

Written at Shurton Bars, near Bridgewater, September 1795

And hark, my love! The sea-breeze moans
Through yon reft house! O'er rolling stones
In bold ambitious sweep
The onward-surgings supply
The silence of the cloudless sky
With mimic thunders deep

Dark reddening from the channelled Isle
(Where stands one solitary pile
Unslated by the blast),
The watchfire, like a sullen star,
Twinkles to many a dozing tar
Rude cradled on the mast

Even there — beneath that lighthouse tower—
In the tumultuous evil hour,
Ere peace with Sara came,
Time was, I should have thought it sweet
To count the echoings of my feet
And watch the storm-vexed flame

And there in black soul-jaundiced fit,
A sad gloom-pampered man to sit,
And listen to the roar
When mountain surges bellowing deep
With an uncouth monster-leap
Plunged foaming on the shore

Then by the lightning's blaze to mark
Some toiling tempest-shattered bark,
Her vain distress-guns hear,
And when a second sheet of light
Flashed o'er the blackness of the night,—
To see *no* vessel there!

from

MADOC IN WALES

To Bardsey was the Lord of Ocean bound,—
 Bardsey, the holy islet, in whose soil
 Did many a chief and many a saint repose,
 His great progenitors He mounts the skiff,
 Her canvas swells before the breeze, the sea
 Sings round her sparkling keel, and soon the Lord
 Of Ocean treads the venerable shore

There was not, on that day, a speck to stain
 The azure heaven, the blessed Sun alone,
 In unapproachable divinity,
 Careered, rejoicing in his fields of light
 How beautiful, beneath the bright-blue sky,
 The billows heave! one glowing green expanse,
 Save where along the bending line of shore
 Such hue is thrown as when the peacock's neck
 Assumes its proudest tint of amethyst,
 Imbathed in emerald glory All the flocks
 Of Ocean are abroad, like floating foam,
 The sea-gulls rise and fall upon the waves,
 With long-protruded neck the cormorants
 Wing their far flight aloft, and round and round
 The plovers wheel, and give their note of joy
 It was a day that sent into the heart
 A summer feeling even the insect-swarms
 From their dark nooks and coverts issued forth,
 To sport through one day of existence more,
 The solitary primrose on the bank
 Seemed now as though it had no cause to mourn
 Its bleak autumnal birth, the Rocks and Shores,
 The Forest, and the everlasting Hills,
 Smiled in that joyful sunshine, — they partook
 The universal blessing

ROBERT SOUTHEY 1774 - 1843

from

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA

The Ancient Sepulchres

It was a Garden still beyond all price,
Even yet it was a place of Paradise,
For where the mighty Ocean could not spare,
There had he with his own creation,
Sought to repair his work of devastation
And here were coral bowers,
And grots of madrepores,
And banks of sponge, as soft and fair to eye
As e'er was mossy bed,
Whereon the Wood-Nymphs lie
With languid limbs in summer's sultry hours
Here, too, were living flowers
Which, like a bud compacted,
Their purple cups contracted,
And now in open blossom spread,
Stretch'd like green anthers many a seeking head
And arborets of jointed stone were there,
And plants of fibres fine, as silkworm's thread,
Yea, beautiful as Mermaid's golden hair
Upon the waves dispread
Others that, like the broad banana growing,
Rais'd their long wrinkled leaves of purple hue,
Like streamers wide out-flowing
And whatsoe'er the depths of Ocean hide
From human eyes, Ladurlad there espied,
Trees of the deep, and shrubs and fruits and flowers,
As fair as ours,
Wherewith the Sea-Nymphs love their locks to braid,
When to their father's hall, at festival
Repairing, they, in emulous array,
Their charms display,
To grace the banquet, and the solemn day

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR 1775 - 1864

from

HEROIC IDYLLS

Ye who have toil'd uphill to reach the haunt
Of other men who lived in other days,
Whether the runs of a citadel
Raised on the summit by Pelasgic hands,
Or chamber of the distaff and the song
Ye will not tell what treasure there ye found,
But I will

Ye found there the viper laid
Full-length, flat-headed, on a sunny slab,
Nor loth to hiss at ye while crawling down
Ye saw the owl flap the loose ivy-leaves
And, hooting, shake the berries on your heads
Now, was it worth your while to mount so high
Merely to say you did it, and to ask
If those about you ever did the like ?
Believe me, O my friends, 'twere better far
To stretch your limbs along the level sand
As they do, where small children scoop the drift,
Thinking it must be gold, where curlews soar
And scales drop glistening from the prey above

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR 1775 - 1864

from

HELLENICS

Enallos and Cymodameia

Thus prayed he
"O God! who givest light to all the world,
Take not from me what makes that light most blessed!
Grant me, if 'tis forbidden me to save
This hapless helpless sea-devoted maid,
To share with her (and bring no curses up
From outraged Neptune) her appointed fate!"

They wrung her from his knee, they hurl'd her down
(Clinging in vain at the hard slippery pitch)
Into the whitening wave But her long hair
Scarcely had risen up again before
Another plunge was heard, another form
Clove the straight line of bubbling foam, direct
As ringdove after ringdove Groans from all
Burst, for the roaring sea ingulph't them both
Onward the vessel flew, the skies again
Shone bright, and thunder roll'd along, not wroth,
But gently murmuring to the white-wing'd sails
Lemnos at close of evening was in sight
The shore was won, the fields markt out, and roofs
Collected the dun wings that seek house-fare

THOMAS CAMPBELL 1777 - 1844

BATTLE OF THE BALTIC

Of Nelson and the North,
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone—
By each gun the lighted brand
In a bold determin'd hand,
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on

Like leviathans afloat
Lay their bulwarks on the brine,
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line
It was ten of April morn by the chime
As they drifted on their path
There was silence deep as death,
And the boldest held his breath
For a time

But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene,
And her van the fleeter rushed
O'er the deadly space between
'Hearts of oak ' our captain cried, when each gun
From its adamant lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,
Like the hurrican eclipse
Of the sun

Again ' again ' again '
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back,
Their shots along the deep slowly boom,
Then ceased—and all is wail
As they strike the shatter'd sail,
Or, in conflagration pale
Light the gloom

Out spoke the victor then,
As he hailed them o'er the wave,
'Ye are brothers ' ye are men '
And we conquer but to save,
So peace instead of death let us bring
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet,
With the crews at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our King '

Then Denmark blessed our chief
That he gave her wounds repose,
And the sounds of joy and grief
From her people wildly rose,
As death withdrew his shades from the day,
While the sun looked smiling bright
O'er a wide and woeful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away

Now joy, Old England, raise
For the tidings of thy might
By the festal cities' blaze,
While the wine-cup shines in light,
And yet, amidst that joy and uproar,
Let us think of them that sleep,
Full many a fathom deep,
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore !

Brave hearts ! to Britain's pride
Once so faithful and so true,
On the deck of fame that died,
With the gallant good Riou—
Soft sigh the winds of Heaven o'er their grave !
While the billow mournful rolls
And the mermaid's song condoles,
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave !

N T CARRINGTON 1777 - 1830

from

ON SEEING A FINE FRIGATE AT ANCHOR
IN A BAY OF MOUNT EDGCUMBE

Is she not beautiful ? "reposing there
"On her own shadow," with her white wings furl'd
Moveless, as in the sleepy sunny air,
Rests the meek swan in her own quiet world

Is she not beautiful ! her graceful bow
Triumphant rising o'er th' enamour'd tides
That, glittering in the noon-day sunbeam, now
Just leap and die along her polished sides

There is nor voice nor murmur on the land,
Still fiercer glows the ray on tower and tree,

There is nor surge nor ripple on the strand,
And not an air is stealing o'er the sea
A thousand eyes are on her, for' she floats
Confess'd a queen upon the subject main,
And hark! as from her decks delicious notes
Breathe, softly breathe, a soul-entrancing strain

Music upon the waters! pouring soft,
From shore to shore along the charmed wave,
The seaman's dreariest toils beguiling oft,
And kindling high the ardour of the brave

N T CARRINGTON 1777 - 1830

•
from

THE GROUND SWELL

Written on the Breakwater, Plymouth Sound

The sun is high, the Atlantic is unfann'd
E'en by the breathings of the gentle West,
And yet the broad blue flood is not at rest
Amid the holy calm on sea and land
There is a murmuring on the distant strand,
And silently though Ocean heaves its breast,
The shoreward swellings wear a feathery crest
And meet the opposing rocks in conflict grand

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK 1785 - 1866

ST PETER OF SCOTLAND

Si bene calculum ponas, ubique naufragum est
Petronius (Satyricon, CXV)

St Peter of Scotland set sail with a crew
Of philosophers, picked from the Bluecap Review
His boat was of paper, old rags were her freight,
And her bottom was sheathed with a spruce copper-plate

Her mast was a quill, and to catch the fair gale
The broad grey goose feather was spread for a sail,
So he ploughed his blithe way through the surge and the spray,
And the name of his boat was the *Promise-to-Pay*

And swiftly and gaily she went on her track,
As if she could never be taken a-back,
As if in her progress there never could be
A chop of the wind or a swell of the sea

She was but a fair-weather vessel, in sooth,
For winds that were gentle, and waves that were smooth,
She was built not for storm, she was armed not for strife,
But in her St Peter risked fortune and life

His fortune, 'tis true, was but bundles of rag,
That no pedlar, not Scotch, would have put in his bag,
The worth of his life none could know but the few
Who insured it on sailing from Sweet Edinbroo

St Peter seemed daft, and he laughed and he quaffed,
But an ill-boding wave struck his vessel right aft
It stove in his quarters and swamped his frail boat,
Which sunk with an eddy and left him afloat

He clung to his goose-quill and floated all night,
And he landed at daybreak in pitiful plight,
And he preached a discourse when he reached the good town,
To prove that his vessel should not have gone down

The nautical science he took for his guide
Allowed no such force as the wind or the tide
None but blockheads could think such a science o'erthrown,
By the breath of a gale which ought not to have blown

from

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

'Tis midnight on the mountains brown
 The cold, round, moon shines deeply down;
 Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
 Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
 Bespangled with those isles of light,
 So wildly, spiritually bright,
 Who ever gazed upon them shining
 And turned to earth without repining,
 Nor wished for wings to flee away,
 And mix with their eternal ray ?
 The waves on either shore lay there
 Calm, clear, and azure as the air,
 And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
 But murmured meekly as the brook
 The winds were pillowed on the waves,
 The banners drooped along their staves,
 And, as they fell around them furling,
 Above them shone the crescent curling,
 And that deep silence was unbroke,
 Save where the watch his signal spoke,
 Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,
 And echo answered from the hill,
 And the wide hum of that wild host
 Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
 As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
 In midnight call to wonted prayer
 *

ILFRACOMBE

By the sea-shore

Yes, I delight, when winds and waters roar,
To tread with shrinking foot the craggy shore,
And watch each billow with collected force
Urge o'er the whirling sands its frothy course
O'er yon black rock whose frowning bastion braves,
And breaks, the onset of the wintry waves,
To mark it dash in snowy showers its spray,
That flames and flashes in the blaze of day,
Or fall from ledge to ledge like mountain stream,
Its foam-balls reddened by the evening beam

Lulled by the tumult, oft, in thoughtful mood,—
On yonder rock how often have I stood,
And breathed moist air, and wooed the briny shower,
Absorbed, and reckless of the passing hour,
Nor moved until the tide, with deafening sound,
Circled my narrowing station close around,
Then, as the exhausted wave forsook the strand,
With foot elastic pressed the yielding sand,
And, ere its force regathered, with a bound
Gained the dry shore, and spurned the grassy ground
Thence with rude toil I clomb yon cliff's steep brow,
And viewed, enraptured, all the scene below,
A vast expanse of heaving billows, crowned
With trembling, snowlike foam, exulted round,
And 'neath my feet, between each watery vale,
I marked the white-winged sea-gull slowly sail

from

JULIAN AND MADDALO

I rode one evening with Count Maddalo
 Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow
 Of Adria towards Venice a bare strand
 Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,
 Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,
 Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,
 Is this, an uninhabited sea-side,
 Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,
 Abandons, and no other object breaks
 The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes
 Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes
 A narrow space of level sand thereon,—
 Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down
 This ride was my delight I love all waste
 And solitary places, where we taste
 The pleasure of believing what we see
 Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be
 And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
 More barren than its billows, and yet more
 Than all, with a remembered friend I love
 To ride as then I rode, — for the winds drove
 The living spray along the sunny air
 Into our faces, the blue heavens were bare,
 Stripped to their depths by the awakening north,
 And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth
 Harmonising with solitude, and sent
 Into our hearts aerial merriment

from
NEPENTHE

Ambition mad, when most sublime!
Fain had I clomb Heaven's empery,
Fain would my Titan spirit climb
Mountain-topt mountain arduously,
To whoop the far uproar to me!
Such insane power and subtilty
The magic drop ethereal gave,
Tireless I clomb that palmy tree
And saw broad-landed Earth how brave!
Low on the horizontal lee
I saw, bedreamed, far ocean dumb
Upgathering his white skirts to come
Midland, his arms twixt Araby
And Europe, Afric, India, spread
I saw, the Mediterraneans three,
Azure, and orient grey, and red,
Washing at once the earth and sky,
With the untravelled wastes that lie
Of greenest ocean, where the South
Swills it with Demogorgon drouth,
Disgorging amid foam and roar
His salt draught back to every shore

Hurry me, Nymphs! O, hurry me
Far above the grovelling sea,
Which, with blind weakness and base roar
Casting his white age on the shore,
Wallows along that slimy floor,
With his widespread webbed hands
Seeking to climb the level sands,
But rejected still to rave
Alive in his uncovered grave .

In the caves of the deep — lost Youth ! lost Youth !—
O'er and o'er, fleeting billows! fleeting billows!—

Rung to his restless everlasting sleep
By the heavy death-bells of the deep,
Under the slimy-dropping sea-green willows,

Poor Youth! lost Youth!

Laying his dolorous head, forsooth,
On Carian reefs uncouth—

Poor Youth!

On the wild sand's ever-shifting pillows!

In the foam's cold shroud — lost Youth! lost Youth!—

And the lithe waterweed swathing round him!—

Mocked by the surges roaring o'er him loud,

“Will the sun-seeker freeze in his shroud,

Aye, where the deep-wheeling eddy has wound him?”

Lost Youth! poor Youth!

Vail him his Dædalian wings, in truth?

Stretched there without all ruth—

Poor Youth!—

Weeping fresh torrents into those that drowned him!

List no more the ominous din

Let us plunge deep Helle in!

Thracia hollos! — what to us

Sky-dejected Icarus?

Shall we less than those wild kine

That swam this shallow salt confine,

Venture to show how mere a span

Keeps continental man from man?

Welcome, gray Europe, native clime

Of clouds, and cliffs yet more sublime!

Gray Europe, on whose Alpine head

The Northwind makes his snowy bed,

And fostered in that savage form

Lies down a blast and wakes a storm!

Up! up! to shrouded Rhodope

That seems in the white waste to be

An ice-rock in a foaming sea!

GEORGE DARLEY 1795 - 1846

from

SYREN SONGS

I The Temptation

O step and try how along the smooth ocean,
As safe as the sea-bird thou'lt wander to me!
O step and feel how supreme the emotion,
To tread like an elfe the green ooze of the sea!

Come and behold the wide deep in its splendour,
While bright shines the path from the sun to the shore,
Come while the waves their wild freedom surrender,
And humble their proud necks for thee to step o'er

Firm is the flood to thy foot, and as fleetly
As wind shalt thou waft on its bosom secure!
Come while the blue sky is beaming so sweetly,
And air is so balmy, and light is so pure!

Fear not, sweet youth! — there's no guile in these numbers,
With me all the long summer's day shalt thou roam,
On the sweet-rocking waves of the west,—for thy slumbers
A couch of red coral swings light in the foam

Step then and try how along the broad level
Thou'lt follow the Sun to his cave in the deep!
O step, and join at his red evening revel
The loud liquid chorus that lulls him to sleep!

With songs I will lull thee, so dulcet, so tender,
The bee cannot murmur as soft to the rose,
With my bright golden harp, gentle youth, I will render
Thy slumbers as calm as an Angel's repose!

Step then, O step! and we'll tread a wild measure
As far as the sunbeams lie smooth on the main!
O step! and try if so blissful a pleasure
Will ne'er tempt thee o'er the bright waters again!

IV The Luring-on

When westerling winds the ocean soothe,
Till calm as Heaven's blue waste it be,
How sweet to glide from smooth to smooth,
Like halcyons of the under sea!

How brave to tread the glistening sands
That lie in amber wreaths below
The twisted toil of faery hands
Condemned to swing them to and fro!

My bright harp with its golden tongue,
Speaks sweetly thro' the lucid wave,
And says its chords need scarce be rung,
While floods so soft its bosom lave

Broad-handed Neptune aye will beat
In milder mood this harp of mine,
So think not, if the song be sweet,
Think not the melody is mine!

V The Sea Ritual

Prayer unsaid, and mass unsung,
Deadman's dirge must still be rung
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells sound!
Mermen chant his dirge around!

Wash him bloodless, smoothe him fair,
Stretch his limbs, and sleek his hair
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells go!
Mermen swing them to and fro!

In the wormless sands shall he
Feast for no foul gluttons be.
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells chime!
Mermen keep the tone and time!

We must with a tombstone brave
Shut the shark out from his grave
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells toll!
Mermen dirgers ring his knoll!

Such a slab will we lay o'er him
All the dead shall rise before him!
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells boom,
Mermen lay him in his tomb!

THOMAS HOOD 1799 - 1845
A STORM AT HASTINGS
AND THE LITTLE UNKNOWN

'Twas August — Hastings every day was filling—
Hastings, that 'greenest spot on memory's waste!'
With crowds of idlers willing or unwilling
To be bedipped — be noticed — or be braced,
And all things rose a penny in a shilling
Meanwhile, from window and from door, in haste
'Accommodation bills' kept coming down,
Gladding 'the world of letters' in that town

Each day pour'd in new coach-fulls of new cits,
Flying from London smoke and dust annoying,
Unmarried Misses hoping to make hits,
And new-wed couples fresh from Tunbridge toying
Lacemen and placemen, ministers and wits,
And quakers of both sexes, much enjoying
A morning's reading by the ocean's rim,
That sect delighting in the sea's broad brim

And lo' amongst all these appear'd a creature,
So small, he almost might a twin have been
With Miss Crachami — dwarfish quite in stature,
Yet well proportion'd — neither fat nor lean,
His face of marvellously pleasant feature,
So short and sweet a man was never seen —
All thought him charming at the first beginning —
Alas, ere long they found him far too winning!

He seem'd in love with chance — and chance repaid
His ardent passion with her fondest smile,
The sunshine of good luck, without a shade,
He staked and won — and won and staked — the bile
It sturr'd of many a man and many a maid,
To see at every venture how that vile
Small gambler snatch'd — and how he won them too —
A living Pam, omnipotent at loo!

Miss Wiggins set her heart upon a box,
'Twas handsome, rosewood, and inlaid with brass,
And dreamt three times she garnish'd it with stocks
Of needles, silks, and cottons — but alas!
She lost it wide awake — We thought Miss Cox
Was lucky — but she saw three caddies pass
To that small ump, — no living luck could loo him!
Sir Stamford would have lost his Raffles to him!

And so he climb'd — and rode, and won — and walk'd,
The wondrous topic of the curious swarm
That haunted the Parade Many were balk'd
Of notoriety by that small form
Pacing it up and down — some even talk'd
Of ducking him — when lo' a dismal storm
Stepp'd in — one Friday, at the close of day—
And every head was turn'd another way—

Watching the grander guest It seem'd to rise
Bulky and slow upon the southern brink
Of the horizon — fann'd by sultry sighs—
So black and threatening, I cannot think
Of any simile, except the skies
Miss Wiggins sometimes *shades* in Indian ink—
Miss-shapen blotches of such heavy vapour,
They seem a deal more solid than her paper

As for the sea, it did not fret, and rave,
And tear its waves to tatters, and so dash on
The stony-hearted beach, — some bards would have
It always rampant, in that idle fashion,—
Whereas the waves roll'd in, subdued and grave,
Like schoolboys, when the master's in a passion,
Who meekly settle in and take their places,
With a very quiet awe on all their faces

Some love to draw the ocean with a head,
Like troubled table-beer, — and make it bounce,
And froth, and roar, and fling, — but this, I've said,
Surged in scarce rougher than a lady's flounce —
But then, a grander contrast thus it bred
With the wild welkin, seeming to pronounce
Something more awful in the serious ear,
As one would whisper that a lion's near—

Who just begins to roar so the hoarse thunder
Growl'd long — but low — a prelude note of death,
As if the stifling clouds yet kept it under,
But still it mutter'd to the sea beneath
Such a continued peal, as made us wonder
It did not pause more oft to take its breath,
Whilst we were panting with the sultry weather,
And hardly cared to wed two words together,

But watch'd the surly advent of the storm,
Much as the brown-cheek'd planters of Barbadoes
Must watch a rising of the Negro swarm —
Meantime it steer'd, like Odin's old Armadas,
Right on our coast, — a dismal, coal-black form, —
Many proud gaits were quell'd — and all bravadoes
Of folly ceased — and sundry idle jokers
Went home to cover up their tongs and pokers

So fierce the lightning flashed — In all their days
The oldest smugglers had not seen such flashing,
And they are used to many a pretty blaze,
To keep their Hollands from an awkward clashing
With hostile cutters in our creeks and bays —
And truly one could think without much lashing
The fancy, that those coasting clouds so awful
And black, were fraught with spirits as unlawful

The gay Parade grew thin — all the fair crowd
Vanish'd — as if they knew their own attractions, —
For now the lightning through a near hand cloud
Began to make some very crooked fractions —
Only some few remain'd that were not cow'd,
A few rough sailors, who had been in actions,
And sundry boatmen, that with quick yeo's,
Lest it should *blow*, — were pulling up the *Rose*

(No flower, but a boat) — some more were hauling
The *Regent* by the head — another crew
With that same cry peculiar to their *calling* —
Were heaving up the *Hope* — and as they knew
The very gods themselves oft got a mauling
In their own realms, the seamen wisely drew
The *Neptune* rather higher on the beach,
That he might lie beyond his billows' reach

And now the storm, with its despotic power,
Had all usurp'd the azure of the skies,
Making our daylight darker by an hour,
And some few drops — of an unusual size —
Few and distinct — scarce twenty to the shower,
Fell like huge tear-drops from a Giant's eyes —
But then this sprinkle thicken'd in a trice
And rain'd much *harder* — in good solid ice

Oh! for a very storm of words to show
How this fierce crash of hail came rushing o'er us!
Handel would make the gusty organs blow
Grandly, and a rich storm in music score us,—
But ev'n his music seem'd composed and low,
When we were *handled* by this Hailstone Chorus,
Whilst thunder rumbled, with its awful sound,
And frozen comfits roll'd along the ground —

As big as bullets —Lord! how they did batter
Our crazy tiles —And now the lightning flash'd
Alternate with the dark, until the latter
Was rarest of the two —the gust too dash'd
So terribly, I thought the hail must shatter
Some panes, — and so it did — and first it smash'd
The very square where I had chose my station
To watch the general illumination

Another, and another, still came in,
And fell in jungling ruin at my feet,
Making transparent holes that let me win
Some samples of the storm —Oh! it was sweet
To think I had a shelter for my skin,
Gulling them through these 'loopholes of retreat'—
Which in a little we began to glaze —
Chiefly with a jactowel and some baize!

By which, the cloud had pass'd o'erhead, but play'd
Its crooked fires in constant flashes still,
Just in our rear, as though it had array'd
Its heavy batteries at Fairlight Mill,
So that it lit the town, and grandly made
The rugged features of the Castle Hill
Leap, like a birth, from chaos, into light,
And then relapse into the gloomy night —

As parcel of the cloud —the clouds themselves,
Like monstrous crags and summits everlasting,
Piled each on each in most gigantic shelves,
That Milton's devils were engaged in blasting —
We could e'en fancy Satan and his elves
Busy upon those crags, and ever casting
Huge fragments loose, — and that we *felt* the sound
They made in falling to the startled ground

And so the tempest scowl'd away, — and soon
Timidly shining through its skirts of jet,
We saw the rim of the pacific moon,
Like a bright fish entangled in a net,
Flashing its silver sides, — how sweet a boon,
Seemed her sweet light, as though it would beget,
With that fair smile, a calm upon the seas —
Peace in the sky — and coolness in the breeze!

Meantime the hail had ceased —and all the brood
Of glaziers stole abroad to count their gains,—
At every window, there were maids who stood
Lamenting o'er the glass's small remains,—
Or with coarse linens made the fractions good,
Stanching the wind in all the wounded panes,—
Or, holding candles to the panes, in doubt
The wind resolved — blowing the candles out

No house was whole that had a southern front,—
No green-house but the same mishap befell,—
Bow-windows and *bell*-glasses bore the brunt —
No sex in glass was spared! — For those who dwell
On each hill side, you might have swum a punt
In any of their parlours,—Mrs Snell
Was slopp'd out of her seat, — and Mr Hitchin
Had a *flow'r*-garden wash'd into a *Kitchen*

But still the sea was mild, and quite disclaim'd
The recent violence — Each after each
The gentle waves a gentle murmur framed,
Tapping, like Woodpeckers, the hollow beach
Howbeit his *weather eye* the seaman aim'd
Across the calm, and hinted by his speech
A gale next morning — and when morning broke,
There was a gale — 'quite equal to bespoke'

Before high water — (it were better far
To christen it not *water* then, but *waiter*,
For then the tide is *serving at the bar*)
Rose such a swell — I never saw one greater!
Black, jagged billows rearing up in war
Like ragged roaring bears against the baiter,
With lots of froth upon the shingle shed,
Like stout poured out with a fine *beachy head*

No open boat was open to a fare,
Or launch'd that morn on seven-shilling trips,
No bathing woman waded — none would dare
A dipping in the wave — but waived their dips,
No seagull ventured on the stormy air,
And all the dreary coast was clear of ships,
For two *lea shores* upon the river Lea
Are not so perilous as one at sea

Awe-struck we sat, and gazed upon the scene
Before us in such horrid hurly-burly,—
A boiling ocean of mix'd black and green,
A sky of copper colour, grim and surly,—
When lo, in that vast hollow scoop'd between
Two rolling Alps of water, — white and curly!
We saw a pair of little arms a-skimming,
Much like a first or last attempt at swimming!

Sometimes a hand — sometimes a little shoe —
Sometimes a skirt — sometimes a hank of hair
Just like a dabbled seaweed rose to view,
Sometimes a knee, sometimes a back was bare —
At last a frightful summerset he threw
Right on the shingles Any one could swear
The lad was dead — without a chance of perjury,
And batter'd by the surge beyond all surgery!

However we snatch'd up the corse thus thrown,
Intending, Christian-like, to sod and turf it,
And after venting Pity's sign and groan,
Then Curiosity began with *her* fit,
And lo! the features of the Small Unknown!
*Twas he that of the surf had had this surfet! —
And in his fob, the cause of late monopolies,
We found a contract signed with Mephistopheles

A bond of blood, whereby the sinner gave
His forfeit sound to Satan in reversion,
Providing in this world he was to have
A lordship over luck, by whose exertion
He might control the course of cards, and brave
All throws of dice, — but on a sea excursion
The juggling Demon, in his usual vein,
Seized the last cast — and *Nick'd* him in the *main*!

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES 1803 - 1849

THE OLD GHOST

Over the water an old ghost strode
 To a churchyard on the shore,
And over him the waters had flowed
 A thousand years or more,
And pale and wan and weary
 Looked never a sprite as he,
For it's lonely and it's dreary
 The ghost of a body to be
 That has mouldered away in the sea

Over the billows the old ghost stepped,
 And the winds in mockery sung, "
For the bodiless ghost would fain have wept
 Over the maiden that lay so young
'Mong the thistles and toadstools so hoary
 And he begged of the waves a tear,
But they shook upward their moonlight glory,
 And the shark looked on with a sneer
 At his yearning desire and agony

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES 1803 - 1849

SONG FROM "THE SHIP"

To sea! To sea! The calm is o'er,
The wanton water leaps in sport,
And rattles down the pebbly shore,
The dolphin wheels, the sea-cows snort,
And unseen Mermaids' pearly song
Comes bubbling up, the weeds among
 Fling broad the sail, dip deep the oar
To sea! To sea! The calm is o'er

To sea! To sea! Our wide-winged bark
Shall billowy cleave its sunny way,
And with its shadow, fleet and dark,
Break the caved Tritons' azure ray,
Like mighty eagle soaring light
O'er antelopes on Alpine height
The anchor heaves, the ship swings free,
The sails swell full To sea, to sea!

REV R S HAWKER 1803 - 1875

THE SEA-BIRD'S CRY

'Tis harsh to hear, from ledge or peak,
The sultry cormorant's tuneless shriek,
Fierce songs they chant, in pool or cave,
Dark wanderers of the western wave
Here would the listening landsman pray
For memory's music, far away,
Soft throats that nestling by the rose,
Soothe the glad rivulet as it flows

Cease, stranger! cease that fruitless word,
Give eve's hushed bough to woodland bird
Let the winged minstrel's valley-note,
'Mid flowers and fragrance, pause and float
Here must the echoing beak prevail,
To pierce the storm, and cleave the gale,
To call, when warring tides shall foam,
The fledgling of the waters home

Wild things are here of sea and land,
Stern surges and a haughty strand,
Sea-monsters haunt yon caverned lair,
The mermaid wrings her briny hair,
That cry, those sullen accents sound
Like native echoes of the ground
Lo! He did all things well who gave
The sea-bird's voice to such a wave

REV R S HAWKER 1803-1875

FEATHERSTONE'S DOOM

Twist thou and twine! in light and gloom
A spell is on thine hand,
The wind shall be thy changeful loom,
Thy web, the shifting sand

Twine from this hour, in ceaseless toil,
On Blackrock's* sullen shore,
Till cordage of the sand shall coil
Where crested surges roar

'Tis for that hour, when, from the wave,
Near voices wildly cried,
When thy stern hand no succour gave,
The cable at thy side

Twist thou and twine! in light and gloom
The spell is on thine hand,
The wind shall be thy changeful loom,
Thy web, the shifting sand

*The Blackrock is a bold, dark, pillared mass of schist, which rises midway on the shore of Widemouth Bay, near Bude, and is held to be the lair of the troubled spirit of Featherstone the wrecker, imprisoned there until he shall have accomplished his doom

REV R S HAWKER 1803-1875

"PATER VESTER PASCIT ILLA"

Our bark is on the waters! wide around
The wandering wave, above, the lonely sky
Hush! a young sea-bird floats, and that quick cry
Shrieks to the levelled weapon's echoing sound,

Grasps its lank wing, and on, with reckless bound!
Yet, creature of the surf, a sheltering breast
To-night shall haunt in vain thy far-off nest,
A call unanswered search the rocky ground
Lord of leviathan! when Ocean heard
Thy gathering voice, and sought his native breeze,
When whales first plunged with life, and the proud deep
Felt unborn tempests heave in troubled sleep,
Thou didst provide, e'en for this nameless bird,
Home, and a natural love, amid the surging seas!

THOMAS WADE 1805 - 1875

from

THE FROZEN COAST

The winter-wild seas have laid bare the shore,
And shingle and sand from its stony floor
Swept, and left naked a desert of rocks
That was buried in pebbly depths before,
And the spray of the waves on their massy blocks
Of a thousand uncouth and fantastic forms,
The offspring misshapen of billows and storms—
Lies frozen, and white as an old man's hair
Some are huddled and clad, others lonely and bare,
And from the weeds on the adamant crowd,
Thick, wither'd and starch'd,
By the keen winds parch'd,
The icicles hang their white frost-woven locks,
Which shell-fish, and creatures scarce animate shroud
Where the waves have reached that blent with the rills
Which flowed o'er the beach to the sea from the hills
And kiss'd them with freshness, of shingle-pierced ice
Lie glittering curves, and the unmoving snow
Streaks the cliffs above and the beach below
And enwreaths the far hills with a varied device,
And smooth frozen sea-weeds are scattered around,
Which, suddenly struck, gleam with stars at the wound

A river, the far-pour'd oblation
Of mountain-streamings, in their congregation,
Beneath a veil of ice transparent,
Through which its crystal clear apparent
Gleams like love through chastity,
Flows along the dreary sand,
Till, breaking from its icy shade,
Twixt ice-banks, from its waters made,
It trickles coldly to the sea
That foams upon the frozen strand

On the vast cliffs that heavenward climb,
Which on their brows wear storm-recorded Time
The frost hath wrought a work sublime!
The manifold descending fountains
Of these cleft and concave mountains
Are veil'd within their icy cells,
Portculliced by vast icicles,
That, dagger-like, in each rocky jag,
Hang threat'ningly from crag to crag,
And where'er a curving roof
Beetles far into the air
There is woven a glorious woof
Of ice-threads o'er the ceiling bare,
Whilst broader streamlets here and there
From the cliff's summit to its base
Lie bright and still in frozen ripples,
Where the faint sunbeams, coldly nurst
Draw slow drops from those icy nipples,
Which, chain'd by the frost in their downward chase,
Seem struggling in vain to leap forth as at first—
A charm on my eyes hath burst!
A waterfall bold,
In many a fold
From steep to steep wide sweeping,
Till, perpendicularly leaping,
It sprang to the rocky beach
In vain hath strived to reach—

For the frozen airs, around it creeping,
In massy ice-bonds clasp it, sleeping,
And there it lives, unheard but dread,
Like a mighty spirit dead!

THOMAS WADE 1805 - 1875

from

A NIGHT AMID THE SEA-WARD HILLS

The water-fowl supine
Crowd close, with hidden bills,
The ruminating kine
Move not upon the hills,
Moths on the warm air dimly flit,
And insects in a slumb'rous fit
Stir all the leaves,
One bird, amid the hazel fluttering,
A sleepy cry of fear is uttering,
And the scarce audible sea low-muttering,
A dull sound weaves

The fishermen's old boats
Like shore-cast things asleep—
And nets, with shapeless floats,
Lie on the shingle deep
Amid them one rough sentinel
Strides as a lynx within his cell,
Still to and fro
Tracking a smuggler's veering skiff,
In the dim distance fugitive,
The sere grass stirs upon the cliff,
With motion slow

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER 1808 - 1879
ON BOARD A JERSEY STEAMER
A Midsummer Sunrise

Long had I watch'd, and, summon'd by the ray
From those small window-lights, that dipt and bow'd
Down to the glimpsing waters, made my way
On deck, while the sun rose without a cloud,
The brazen plates upon the steerage-wheel
Flash'd forth, the steersman's face came full in view,
Found at his post, he met the bright appeal
Of morning-tide, and answer'd 'I am true'
Then back again into my berth I crept,
And lay awhile, at gaze, with upward eye,
Where gleams and shadows from the ocean swept,
And flicker'd wildly o'er the dreaming fly,
That clung to the low ceiling Then I slept
And woke, and sought once more the sea and sky

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER 1808 - 1879
LITTLE SOPHY BY THE SEASIDE

Young Sophy leads a life without alloy
Of pain, she dances in the stormy air,
While her pink sash and length of golden hair
With answering motion time her step of joy!
Now turns she through that seaward gate of heaven,
That opens on the sward above the cliff,—
Glancing a moment at each barque and skiff,
Along the roughening waters homeward driven,
Shoreward she hies, her wooden spade in hand,
Straight down to childhood's ancient field of play,
To claim her right of common in the land
Where little edgeless tools make easy way—
A right no cruel Act shall e'er gainsay,
No greed dispute the freedom of the sand

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER 1808 - 1879

THE SEASIDE

In and out of the Season

In summer-time it was a paradise
Of mountain, frith, and bay, and shining sand,
Our outward rowers sang towards the land,
Follow'd by waving hands and happy cries
By the full flood the groups no longer roam,
And when, at ebb, the glistening beach grows wide,
No barefoot children race into the foam,
But passive jellies wait the turn of tide
Like some forsaken lover, lingering there,
The boatman stands, the maidens trip no more
With loosen'd locks, far from the billows' roar
The Mauds and Maries knot their tresses fair,
Where not a foam-flake from th' enamour'd shore
Comes down the sea-wind on the golden hair

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON 1809 - 1892

THE KRAKEN

Below the thunders of the upper deep,
Far far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height,
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battering upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep,
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON 1809 - 1892

from

AUDLEY COURT

But ere the night we rose
And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills, and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
The town was hush'd beneath us lower down
The bay was oily calm, the harbour-buoy,
Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON 1809 - 1892

from

ENOCH ARDEN

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm,
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands,
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster, then a moulder'd church, and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill,
And high in heaven behind it a grey down
With Danish barrows, and a hazelwood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,

Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn,
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily wash'd away

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON 1809 - 1892

from

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again,
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King,
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear,

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell, but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew
The must aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle but no man was moving there,
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen, only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full

from

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY

Even as we met where we have met so oft,
Now meet we on this unpretending beach
Below the little village little, ay!
But pleasant, may my gratitude subjoin?
Meek, hitherto un-Murrayed bathing-place,
Best loved of sea-coast-nook-ful Normandy!
That, just behind you, is mine own hired house
With right of pathway through the field in front,
No prejudice to all its growth unsheaved
Of emerald luzern bursting into blue
Be sure I keep the path that hugs the wall,
Of mornings, as I pad from door to gate!
Yon yellow — what if not wild-mustard flower?—
Of that, my naked sole makes lawful prize,
Bruising the acrid aromatics out,
Till, what they preface, good salt savours sting
From, first, the sifted sands, then sands in slab,
Smooth save for pipy wreath-work of the worm
(Granite and mussel-shell are ground alike
To glittering paste, — the live worm troubles yet)
Then, dry and moist, the varech limit-line,
Burnt cinder-black, with brown uncrumpled swathe
Of berried softness, sea-swoln thrice its size,
And, lo, the wave protrudes a lip at last,
And flecks my foot with froth, nor tempts in vain

ROBERT BROWNING 1812 - 1889

from

JAMES LEE'S WIFE

In the Doorway

The swallow has set her six young on the rail,
And looks sea-ward
The water's in stripes like a snake, olive-pale
To the leeward,—
On the weather-side, black, spotted white with the wind
"Good fortune departs, and disaster's behind,"—
Hark, the wind with its wants and its infinite wail!

Our fig-tree, that leaned for the saltness, has furled
Her five fingers,
Each leaf like a hand opened wide to the world
Where there lingers
No glint of the gold, Summer sent for her sake
How the vines writhe in rows, each impaled on its stake!
My heart shrivels up and my spirit shrinks curled

Yet here are we two, we have love, house enough,
With the field there,
This house of four rooms, that field red and rough,
Though it yield there,
For the rabbit that robs, scarce a blade or a bent,
If a magpie alight now, it seems an event,
And they both will be gone at November's rebuff

But why must cold spread ? but wherefore bring change
To the spirit,
God meant should mate his with an infinite range,
And inherit
His power to put life in the darkness and cold ?
Oh, live and love worthily, bear and be bold!
Whom Summer made friends of, let Winter estrange!

HERMAN MELVILLE 1819-1891

from

THE HAGLETS

Embedded deep with shells
And drifted treasure deep,
Forever he sinks deeper in
Unfathomable sleep—
His cannon round him thrown,
His sailors at his feet,
The wizard sea enchanting them
Where never haglets beat
On nights when meteors play
And light the breakers' dance,
The Oreads from the caves
With silvery elves advance,
And up from ocean stream,
And down from heaven far,
The rays that blend in dream
The abysm and the star

HERMAN MELVILLE 1819-1891

from

THE AEOLIAN HARP

It has drifted, waterlogged,
Till by trailing weeds beclugged
 Drifted, drifted, day by day,
 Pilotless on pathless way
It has drifted till each plank
Is oozy as the oyster-bank
 Drifted, drifted, night by night,
 Craft that never shows a light,
Nor ever, to prevent worse knell,
Tolls in fog the warning bell

HERMAN MELVILLE 1819 - 1891

THE TUFT OF KELP

All dripping in tangles green,
Cast up by a lonely sea,
If purer for that, O Weed,
Bitterer, too, are ye ?

JEAN INGELOW 1820 - 1897

from

BROTHERS, AND A SERMON

It was a village built in a green rent,
Between two cliffs that skirt the dangerous bay

A reef of level rock runs out to sea,
And you may lie on it and look sheer down,
Just where the 'Grace of Sunderland' was lost,
And see the elastic banners of the dulse
Rock softly, and the orange star-fish creep
Across the laver, and the mackerel shoot
Over and under it, like silver boats
Turning at will and plying under water

And down we ran and lay upon the reef,
And saw the swimming infants, emerald green,
In separate shoals, the scarcely turning ebb
Bringing them in, while sleek, and not intent
On chase, but taking that which came to hand,
The full-fed mackerel and the gurnet swam
Between, and settling on the polished sea,
A thousand snow-white gulls sat lovingly
In social rings, and twittered while they fed
The village dogs and ours, elate and brave,
Lay looking over, barking at the fish,
Fast, fast the silver creatures took the bait,
And when they heaved and floundered on the rock,

In beauteous misery, a sudden pat
Some shaggy pup would deal, then back away,
At distance eye them with sagacious doubt,
And shrink half frightened from the slippery things

And so we lay from ebb-tide, till the flow
Rose high enough to drive us from the reef,
The fisher lads went home across the sand

We, too, rose up (the crimson in the sky
Flushing our faces), and went sauntering on,
And thought to reach our lodging, by the cliff
And up and down among the heather beds,
And up and down between the sheaves, we sped,
Doubling and winding, for a long ravine
Ran up into the land and cut us off,
Pushing out slippery ledges for the birds,
And rent with many a crevice, where the wind
Had laid up drifts of empty eggshells, swept
From the bare berths of gulls and guillemots

MATTHEW ARNOLD 1822 - 1888

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the Straits, — on the French coast the light
Gleams, and is gone, the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the ebb meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves suck back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery, we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd,
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain,
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI 1828 - 1882

THE SEA-LIMITS

Consider the sea's listless chime
Time's self it is, made audible,—
The murmur of the earth's own shell
Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end our sight may pass
No furlong further Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time

No quiet, which is death's, — it hath
The mournfulness of ancient life,
Enduring always at dull strife
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
Its painful pulse is in the sands
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Grey and not known, along its path

Listen alone beside the sea,
Listen alone among the woods,
Those voices of twin solitudes
Shall have one sound alike to thee
Hark where the murmurs of thronged men
Surge and sink back and surge again,—
Still the one voice of wave and tree

Gather a shell from the strown beach
And listen at its lips they sigh
The same desire and mystery,
The echo of the whole sea's speech
And all mankind is thus at heart
Not anything but what thou art
And Earth, Sea, Man are all in each

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI 1830 - 1894

SLEEP AT SEA

Sound the deep waters —
Who shall sound that deep?—
Too short the plummet,
And the watchmen sleep
Some dream of effort
Up a toilsome steep,
Some dream of pasture grounds
For harmless shéep

White shapes flit to and fro
From mast to mast,
They feel the distant tempest
That nears them fast
Great rocks are straight ahead,
Great shoals not past,
They shout to one another
Upon the blast

Oh soft the streams drop music
Between the hills,
And musical the birds' nests
Beside those rills
The nests are types of home
Love-hidden from ills,
The nests are types of spirits
Love-music fills

So dream the sleepers,
Each man in his place,
The lightning shows the smile
Upon each face
The ship is driving—driving—
It drives apace
And sleepers smile, and spirits
Bewail their case

The lightning glares and reddens
Across the skies,
It seems but sunset
To those sleeping eyes
When did the sun go down
On such a wise ?
From such a sunset
When shall day arise ?

'Wake,' call the spirits
But to heedless ears
They have forgotten sorrows
And hopes and fears,
They have forgotten perils
And smiles and tears,
Their dream has held them long,
Long years and years

'Wake,' call the spirits again
But it would take
A louder summons
To bid them awake
Some dream of pleasure
For another's sake,
Some dream, forgetful
Of a lifelong ache

One by one slowly,
Ah, how sad and slow!
Wailing and praying
The spirits rise and go
Clear stainless spirits
White, as white as snow,
Pale spirits, wailing
For an overthrow

One by one flitting,
Like a mournful bird
Whose song is tired at last
For no mate heard
The loving voice is silent,
The useless word,
One by one flitting
Sick with hope deferred.

Driving and driving,
The ship drives amain
While swift from mast to mast
Shapes flit again,
Flit silent as the silence
Where men lie slain,
Their shadow cast upon the sails
Is like a stain

No voice to call the sleepers,
No hand to raise
They sleep to death in dreaming
Of length of days
Vanity of vanities,
The Preacher says
Vanity is the end
Of all their ways

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI 1830 - 1894

A FISHER-WIFE

The soonest mended, nothing said,
And help may rise from east or west,
But my two hands are lumps of lead,
My heart sits leaden in my breast

O north wind, swoop not from the north,
O south wind, linger in the south,
Oh come not raving raging forth,
To bring my heart into my mouth,

For I've a husband out at sea,
Afloat on feeble planks of wood,
He does not know what fear may be,
I would have told him if I could

I would have locked him in my arms,
I would have hid him in my heart,
For oh the waves are fraught with harms,
And he and I so far apart !

THE HON RODEN NOEL 1834 - 1894

from

A SEA SYMPHONY

IV Breeze

Who would linger idle,
Dallying would lie,
When wind and wave, a bridal
Celebrating, fly ?
Let him plunge among them,
Who hath wooed enough,
Flirted with them, sung them !
In the salt seatrough
He may win them, onward
On a buoyant crest,
Far to seaward, sunward,
Oceanborne to rest !
Wild wind will sing over him,
And the free foam cover him,
Swimming seaward, sunward,
On a blithe sea-breast !
On a blithe sea-bosom
Swims another too,
Swims a live sea-blossom,
A grey-winged seamew !
Grapegreen all the waves are,
By whose hurrying line,
Half of ships and caves are
Buried under brine,
Supple, shifting ranges
Lucent at the crest,
With pearly surface-changes
Never laid to rest

Now a dipping gunwale
Momently he sees,
Now a fuming funnel,
Or red flag in the breeze
Arms flung open wide,
Lip the laughing sea,
For playfellow, for bride,
Claim her impetuously!

THE HON RODEN NOEL 1834 - 1894

from

FOWEY

To the homely laddered pier,
Fishers bring their haul to sell,
Opal-hued, green mackerel,
Dry their nets, and gossip glad,
Blue-girt, big-booted, man or lad
How often our lithe oar-blades quiver
Upon the healthful tidal river!
How they round the guarding fort,
To find a well-beloved resort
On tawny sand along the coast,
Where huge rugged rocks are tost,
By caves, for some enrapturing bathe,
Where nought may interrupt or scathe,
Only green billows dance, and fly
White sea-mews with their dear wild cry
O the tender-tinted lavers,
Where a dimpling water wavers,
Pink, purple, lilac, turquoise gems
Illume unbathed amber stems

Crimson weeds from ocean groves
Fleck the yellow floor of coves,
Diapered by gently-flowing
Ripple when no winds are blowing,
Memories of lace-like foam,

Where confused soft bubbles roam,
Launch forth a faery promontory,
Form momentary silver bays,
And when they vanish, heavenly glory
All the shining shore inlays,
A mirrored pure cerulean hue,
Fine fleeces floating in the blue
Or by moonlight, how we drove
Our keel into a yielding cove!
Pale foam whispering on the sand,
Eerie as a goblin land,
Shadowy arch, and cave, and stone,
One phantasmal semitone,
Like visions wizard Wagner raises
With mystical enchanted phrases

WILLIAM MORRIS 1834 - 1896

A GARDEN BY THE SEA

I know a little garden-close,
Set thick with lily and red rose,
Where I would wander if I might
From dewy morn to dewy night,
And have one with me wandering

And though within it no birds sing,
And though no pillared house is there,
And though the apple-boughs are bare
Of fruit and blossom, would to God
Her feet upon the green grass trod,
And I beheld them as before

There comes a murmur from the shore,
And in the close two fair streams are,
Drawn from the purple hills afar,
Drawn down unto the restless sea -
Dark hills whose heath-bloom feeds no bee,

Dark shore no ship has ever seen,
Tormented by the billows green
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry
For which I cry both day and night,
For which I let slip all delight,
Whereby I grow both deaf and blind,
Careless to win, unskilled to find,
And quick to lose what all men seek

Yet tottering as I am and weak,
Still have I left a little breath
To seek within the jaws of death
An entrance to that happy place,
To seek the unforgotten face,
Once seen, once kissed, once reft from me
Anigh the murmuring of the sea

WILLIAM MORRIS 1834 - 1896

from

ICELAND FIRST SEEN

Lo from our loitering ship
a new land at last to be seen;
Toothed rocks down the side of the firth
on the east guard a weary wide lea,
And black slope the hillsides above,
striped adown with their desolate green
And a peak rises up on the west
from the meeting of cloud and of sea,
Foursquare from base unto point
like the building of Gods that have been,
The last of that waste of the mountains
all cloud-wreathed and snow-flecked and grey,
And bright with the dawn that began
just now at the ending of day

Ah! what came we forth for to see
that our hearts are so hot with desire ?
Is it enough for our rest,
the sight of this desolate strand,
And the mountain-waste voiceless as death
but for winds that may sleep not nor tire ?
Why do we long to wend forth
through the length and breadth of a land,
Dreadful with grinding of ice,
and record of scarce hidden fire,
But that there 'mid the grey grassy dales
sore scarred by the ruining streams
Lives the tale of the Northland of old
and the undying glory of dreams ?

•
O land, as some cave by the sea
where the treasures of old have been laid,
The sword it may be of a king
whose name was the turning of fight
Or the staff of some wise of the world
that many things made and unmade
Or the ring of a woman maybe
whose woe is grown wealth and delight
No wheat and no wine grows above it,
no orchard for blossom and shade,
The few ships that sail by its blackness
but deem it the mouth of a grave,
Yet sure when the world shall awaken,
this too shall be mighty to save

THE CHURCHYARD ON THE SANDS

My Love lies in the gates of foam,
The last dear wreck of shore,
The naked sea-marsh binds her home,
The sand her chamber door

The grey gull flaps the written stones,
The ox-birds chase the tide,
And near that narrow field of bones
Great ships at anchor ride

Black piers with crust of dripping green,
One foreland, like a hand,
O'er intervals of grass between
Dim lonely dunes of sand

A church of silent weathered looks,
A breezy reddish tower,
A yard whose mounded resting-nooks
Are tinged with sorrel flower

In peace the swallow's eggs are laid
Along the belfry walls,
The tempest does not reach her shade,
The rain her silent halls

But sails are sweet in summer sky,
The lark throws down a lay,
The long salt levels steam and dry,
The cloud-heart melts away

But patches of the sea-pink shine,
The pied crows poise and come,
The mallow hangs, the bindweeds twine,
Where her sweet lips are dumb

The passion of the wave is mute,
No sound or ocean shock,
No music save the trilling flute
That marks the curlew flock

But yonder when the wind is keen,
And rainy air is clear,
The merchant city's spires are seen,
The toil of men grows near

Along the coast-way grind the wheels
Of endless carts of coal,
And on the sides of giant keels
The shipyard hammers roll

The world [★]creeps here upon the shout,
And stirs my heart in pain,
The mist descends and blots it out,
And I am strong again

Strong and alone, my dove, with thee,
And, tho' mine eyes be wet,
There's nothing in the world to me
So dear as my regret

I would not change my sorrow, sweet,
For others' nuptial hours,
I love the daisies at thy feet
More than their orange flowers

My hand alone shall tend thy tomb
From leaf-bud to leaf-fall,
And wreath around each season's bloom
Till autumn runs all

Let snowdrops, early in the year,
Droop o'er her silent breast,
And bid the later cowslip rear
The amber of its crest

Come hither, linnets tufted-red,
Drift by, O wailing tern,
Set pure vale lilies at her head,
At her feet lady-fern

Grow, samphire, at the tidal brink,
Wave, pansies of the shore,
To whisper how alone I think
Of her for evermore

Bring blue sea-hollies thorny, keen,
Long lavender in flower,
Gray wormwood like a hoary queen,
Stanch mullein like a tower

O sea-wall mounded long and low,
Let iron bounds be thine,
Nor let the salt wave overflow
That breast I held divine

Nor float its sea-weed to her hair,
Nor dim her eyes with sands
No fluted cockle burrow where
Sleep folds her patient hands

Tho' thy crest feel the wild sea's breath,
Tho' tide-weight tear thy root,
Oh, guard the treasure house, where Death
Has bound my darling mute

Tho' cold her pale lips to reward
With Love's own mysteries,
Ah, rob no daisy from her sward,
Rough gale of eastern seas!

Ah, render sere no silken bent,
That by her head-stone waves,
Let noon and golden summer blent
Pervade these ocean graves

And, ah, dear heart, in thy still nest,
Resign this earth of woes,
Forget the ardours of the west,
Neglect the morning glows

Sleep, and forget all things but one,
Heard in each wave of sea,—
How lonely all the years will run
Until I rest by thee

LORD DE TABLEY 1835 - 1895

THE OCEAN WOOD

Grey woods within whose silent shade
The ocean voice is dimly known
Where undisturbed the violets fade,
And roses perish overblown

Calm rests the wave against the beach
Calm rocks the wave-bird on its tide,
And calmer in their heaven than each,
The gleaming bands of sunset ride

Soon will the ripple move again
Soon will the shorelark flute its song
And in sweet emphasis of pain
The rock-dove mourn the cliffs along

Sweet shall resound the curlew's wail,
New sails come sweeping up the sea
But all the ships that ever sail
Will bring no comfort home to me

EVENING BY THE SEA

It was between the night and day,
The trees looked weary — one by one
Against the west they seemed to sway,
And yet were steady The sad sun
In a sick doubt of colour lay
Across the water's belt of dun

On the weak wind scarce flakes of foam
There floated, hardly borne at all
From the rent edge of water — some
Between slack gusts the wind let fall,
The white brine could not overcome
That pale grass on the southern wall

That evening one could always hear
The sharp hiss of the shingle, rent
As each wave settled heavier,
The same rough way This noise was blent
With many sounds that hurt the air
As the salt sea-wind came and went

The wind wailed once and was not Then
The white sea touching its salt edge
Dropped in a slow low sigh again
The ripples deepened to the ledge,
Across the beach from marsh and fen
Came a faint smell of rotten sedge

Like a hurt thing that will not die
The sea lay moaning, waifs of weed
Strove thro' the water painfully
Or lay flat, like drenched hair indeed,
Rolled over with the pebbles, nigh
Low places where the rock-fish feed

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
Now lie dead

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand ?
So long have the grey bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briars if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken,
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not,
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry,
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song,
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, 'Look thither,'
Did he whisper? 'Look forth from the flowers to the sea,
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die — but we?'
And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end — but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loverless now as the grass above them
Or the wave

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep

Here death may deal not again for ever,
Here change may come not till all change end
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left nought living to ravage and rend
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be,
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE 1837 - 1909

from

BY THE NORTH SEA

A land that is lonelier than ruin,
A sea that is stranger than death
Far fields that a rose never blew in,
Wan waste where the winds lack breath,
Waste endless and boundless and flowerless
But of marsh-blossoms fruitless as free
Where earth lies exhausted, as powerless
To strive with the sea

Far flickers the flight of the swallows,
Far flutters the weft of the grass
Spun dense over desolate hollows
More pale than the clouds as they pass
Thick woven as the weft of a witch is
Round the heart of a thrall that hath sinned,
Whose youth and the wrecks of its riches
Are waifs on the wind

The pastures are herdless and sheepless,
No pasture or shelter for herds
The wind is relentless and sleepless,
And restless and songless the birds,
Their cries from afar fall breathless,
Their wings are as lightnings that flee,
For the land has two lords that are deathless
Death's self, and the sea

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE 1837 - 1909

NEAP-TIDE

Far off is the sea, and the land is afar
The low banks reach at the sky,
Seen hence, and are heavenward high,
Though light for the leap of a boy they are,
And the far sea late was nigh

The fair wild fields and the circling downs,
The bright sweet marshes and meads
All glorious with flowerlike weeds,
The great grey churches, the sea-washed towns,
Recede as a dream recedes

The world draws back, and the world's light wanes,
As a dream dies down and is dead,
And the clouds and the gleams overhead
Change, and change, and the sea remains,
A shadow of dreamlike dread

Wild, and woful, and pale, and grey,
A shadow of sleepless fear,
A corpse with the night for bier,
The fairest thing that beholds the day
Lies haggard and hopeless here

And the wind's wings, broken and spent, subside,
And the dumb waste world is hoar,
And strange as the sea the shore,
And shadows of shapeless dreams abide
Where life may abide no more

A sail to seaward, a sound from shoreward,
And the spell were broken that seems
To reign in a world of dreams
Where vainly the dreamer's feet make forward
And vainly the low sky gleams

The sea-forsaken forlorn deep-wrinkled
Salt slanting stretches of sand
That slope to the seaward hand,
Were they fain of the ripples that flashed and twinkled
And laughed as they struck the strand ?

As bells on the reins of the fairies ring
The ripples that kissed them rang,
The light from the sundawn sprang,
And the sweetest of songs that the world may sing
Was theirs when the full sea sang.

Now no light is in heaven, and now
Not a note of the sea-wind's tune
Rings hither the bleak sky's boon
Grants hardly sight of a grey sun's brow—
A sun more sad than the moon

More sad than a moon that clouds beleaguer
And storm is a scourge to smite,
The sick sun's shadowlike light
Grows faint as the clouds and the waves wax eager,
And withers away from sight

The day's heart cowers, and the night's heart quickens
Full fain would the day be dead
And the stark night reign in his stead
The sea falls dumb as the sea-fog thickens
And the sunset dies for dread

Outside of the range of time, whose breath
Is keen as the manslayer's knife
And his peace but a truce for strife,
Who knows if haply the shadow of death
May be not the light of life ?

For the storm and the rain and the darkness borrow
But an hour from the suns to be,
But a strange swift passage, that we
May rejoice, who have mourned not to-day, to-morrow
In the sun and the wind and the sea

THOMAS HARDY 1840 - 1928

I FOUND HER OUT THERE

I found her out there
On a slope few see,
That falls westwardly
To the salt-edged air,
Where the ocean breaks
On the purple strand,
And the hurricane shakes
The solid land

I brought her here,
And have laid her to rest
In a noiseless nest
No sea beats near
She will never be stirred
In her loamy cell
By the waves long heard
And loved so well

So she does not sleep
By those haunted heights
The Atlantic smites
And the blind gales sweep,
Whence she often would gaze
At Dundagel's famed head,
While the dipping blaze
Dyed her face fire-red,

And would sigh at the tale
Of sunk Lyonesse,
As a wind-tugged tress
Flapped her cheek like a flail,
Or listen at whiles
With a thought-bound brow
To the murmuring miles
She is far from now

Yet her shade, maybe,
Will creep underground
Till it catch the sound
Of that western sea
As it swells and sobs
Where she once domiciled,
And joy in its throbs
With the heart of a child

THOMAS HARDY 1840 - 1928

BEENY CLIFF

March 1870 — March 1913

O the opal and the sapphire of that wandering
western sea,
And the woman riding high above with bright
hair flapping free—
The woman whom I loved so, and who loyally
loved me

The pale mews plained below us, and the waves
seemed far away
In a nether sky, engrossed in saying their ceaseless
babbling say,
As we laughed light-heartedly aloft on that clear-
sunned March day

A little cloud then cloaked us, and there flew an
irised rain,
And the Atlantic dyed its levels with a dull
misfeatured stain,
And then the sun burst out again, and purples
prinked the main

—Still in all its chasmal beauty bulks old Beeny
to the sky,
And shall she and I not go there once again now —
March is nigh,
And the sweet things said in that March say anew
there by and by ?

What if still in chasmal beauty looms that wild
weird western shore,
The woman now is — elsewhere — whom the
ambling pony bore,
And nor knows nor cares for Beeny, and will
laugh there nevermore

THOMAS HARDY 1840 - 1928

ON THE ESPLANADE

Midsummer 10 p m

The broad bald moon edged up where the sea was wide,
✓ Mild, mellow-faced,
Beneath, a tumbling twinkle of shines, like dyed,
A trackway traced
To the shore, as of petals fallen from a rose to waste,
In its overblow,
And fluttering afloat on inward heaves of the tide —
All this, so plain, yet the rest I did not know

The horizon gets lost in a mist new-wrought by the night
The lamps of the Bay
That reach from behind me round to the left and right
On the sea-wall way
For a constant mile of curve, make a long display
As a pearl-strung row,
Under which in the waves they bore their gumlets of light —
All this was plain, but there was a thing not so

Inside a window, open, with undrawn blind,
There plays and sings
A lady unseen a melody undefined
And where the moon flings
Its shimmer a vessel crosses, whereon to the strings
Plucked sweetly and low
Of a harp, they dance Yea, such did I mark That, behind,
My Fate's masked face crept near me I did not know¹

THOMAS HARDY 1840 - 1928

THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN

LINES ON THE LOSS OF THE "TITANIC"

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrud, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls — grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query "What does this vaingloriousness down here?"

Well while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

Prepared a sinister mate
For her — so gaily great —
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too

Alien they seemed to be
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august event,
Till the Spinner of the Years
Said "Now!" And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres

HENRY KENDALL 1841 - 1882

ARAKOON

Lo! in storms, the triple-headed
Hill, whose dreaded
Bases battle with the seas,
Looms across fierce widths of fleeting
Waters beating
Evermore on roaring leas!

Arakoon, the black, the lonely!
Housed with only
Cloud and rain-wind, mist and damp
Round whose foam-drenched feet and nether
Depths, together
Sullen sprites of thunder tramp!

*

There the East hums loud and surly,
Late and early,
Through the chasms and the caves,
And across the naked verges
Leap the surges!
White and wailing waifs of waves

Day by day the sea-fogs gathered—
Tempest-fathered—
Pitch their tents on yonder peak,
Yellow drifts and fragments lying
Where the flying
Torrents chafe the cloven creek!

And at nightfall, when the driven
Bolts of heaven
Smite the rock and break the bluff,
Thither troop the elves whose home is
Where the foam is,
And the echo, and the clough

Ever girt about with noises,
Stormy voices,
And the salt breath of the Strait,
Stands the steadfast Mountain Giant,
Grim, reliant,
Dark as Death, and firm as Fate

So when trouble treads, like thunder,
Weak men under—
Treads and breaks the thews of these—
Set thyself to bear it bravely,
Greatly, gravely,
Like the hill in yonder seas

Since the wrestling and endurance
Give assurance
To the faint at bay with pain,
That no soul to strong endeavour,
Yoked for ever,
Works against the tide in vain

SYRINX

A heap of low, dark, rocky coast,
Unknown to foot or feather ?
A sea-voice moaning like a ghost,
And fits of fiery weather !

The flying Syrinx turned and sped
By dim, mysterious hollows,
Where night is black, and day is red,
And frost the fire-wind follows !

Strong, heavv footfalls in the wake
Came up with flights of water
The gods were mournful for the sake
Of Ladon's lovely daughter

For when she came to spike and spine,
Where reef and river gather,
Her feet were sore with shell and chine,
She could not travel farther

Across a naked ~~stra~~at of land
Blown sleet and surge were humming;
But, trammelled with the shifting sand,
She heard the monster coming !

A thing of hoofs, and horns, and lust !
A gaunt, goat-footed stranger !
She bowed her body in the dust
And called on Zeus to change her

And called on Hermes, fair and fleet,
And her of hounds and quiver,
To hide her in the thickets sweet
That sighed above the river

So he that sits on flaming wheels,
And rules the sea and thunder,
Caught up the satyr by the heels
And tore his skirts in sunder

While Arcas, of the glittering plumes,
Took Ladon's daughter lightly,
And set her in the gracious glooms
That mix with moon-mist nightly,

And touched her lips with wild-flower wine,
And changed her body slowly,
Till, in soft reeds of song and shine,
Her life was hidden wholly

RUDYARD KIPLING 1865 - 1936

from

SUSSEX

Clean of officious fence or hedge,
Half-wild and wholly tame,
The wise turf cloaks the white cliff edge
As when the Romans came .
What sign of those that fought and died
At shift of sword and sword ?
The barrow and the camp abide,
The sunlight and the sward

Here leaps ashore the full Sou'west
All heavy-winged with brine,
Here lies above the folded crest
The channel's leaden line,
And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,
And here, each warning each,
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring
Along the hidden beach

EMILY LAWLESS d 1913

THE CORMORANT

Song

Now the seagull spreads his wing,
And the puffin seeks the shore,
Home flies every living thing,
Yo, ho! the breakers roar!
*Only the Cormorant, dark and sly,
Watches the waves with a sea-green eye*

Under his bows the breakers fleet,
All alone, alone went he,
Flying alone through the blinding sleet,
Flying alone through the raging sea
*Only the Cormorant, dark and sly,
Watches the waves with a sea-green eye*

Round his bark the billows roar,
Dancing along to a lonely grave,
Death behind, and Death before
Yo, ho! the breakers rave!
*Only the Cormorant, dark and sly,
Watches the waves with a sea-green eye*

Hark! the waves on their iron floor,
See Kilstuffin's naked brow!
Iron cliff, and iron shore,
Erin's saints preserve him now!
*Only the Cormorant, dark and sly,
Watches the waves with a sea-green eye*

Hark! was that a drowning cry?
Erin's saints receive his soul!
Nothing now twixt sea and sky
Yo, ho! the breakers roll!
*Only the Cormorant, dark and sly,
Watches the waves with a sea-green eye*

JAMES ELROY FLECKER 1884 - 1915

THE WELSH SEA

Far out across Carnarvon bay,
Beneath the evening waves,
The ancient dead begin their day
And stream among the graves

Listen, for they of ghostly speech,
Who died when Christ was born,
May dance upon the yellow beach
That once was yellow corn

And you may learn of Dyfed's reign,
And dream Nemedian tales
Of Kings who sailed in ships from Spain
And lent their swords to Wales

Listen, for like a slow, green snake
The Ocean twists and stirs,
And whispers how the dead men wake
And call across the years

INDEX

	PAGE		PAGE
ARNOLD, MATTHEW 1822 - 1888		DARLEY, GEORGE 1795 - 1846	
Dover Beach	87	Nepenthe (<i>extracts</i>)	60
BEDDOES, THOMAS LOVELL		Syren Songs	
1803 - 1849		<i>The Temptation</i>	62
The Old Ghost	72	<i>The Luring-on</i>	63
Song from the Ship	72	<i>The Sea-Ritual</i>	63
BLAKE, WILLIAM 1757 - 1827		DRYDEN, JOHN 1631 - 1700	
From a Letter to Thomas		Annus Mirabilis (<i>extracts</i>)	15
Butts, Felpham, October		DYER, JOHN c 1700 - 1758	
2nd, 1800	41	The Fleece (<i>extract</i> from Book	
BOWLES, WILLIAM LISLE		IV)	34
1762 - 1850		FALCONER, WILLIAM 1732 - 1769	
St Michael's Mount (<i>extract</i>)	44	The Shipwreck (<i>extract</i>)	36
BROWNE, WILLIAM 1591 - c 1643		FLECKER, JAMES ELROY	
The Harbour	4	1884 - 1915	
BROWNING, ROBERT 1812 - 1889		The Welsh Sea	118
Red Cotton Night-Cap		HARDY, THOMAS 1840 - 1928	
Country (<i>extract</i>)	83	I Found Her out There	108
James Lee's Wife (<i>extract</i>)	84	Beeny Cliff	110
BYRON, LORD 1788 - 1824		On the Esplanade	111
The Siege of Corinth (<i>extract</i>)	57	The Convergence of the Twain	112
CAMPBELL, THOMAS 1777 - 1844		HAWKER, REV R S 1803 - 1875	
Battle of the Baltic	52	The Sea-bird's Cry	73
CARRINGTON, N T 1777 - 1830		Featherstone's Doom	74
On seeing a fine Frigate at		Pater vester pascit illa"	74
Anchor in a bay of Mount		HOLLOWAY, WILLIAM fl 1803	
Edgcumbe (<i>extract</i>)	54	Scenes of Youth (<i>extract</i>)	43
The Groundswell (<i>extract</i>)	55	HOOD, THOMAS 1799 - 1845	
CHAPMAN, GEORGE c 1559 - 1634		A Storm at Hastings	64
The Odyssey (<i>extract</i> from		INGELOW, JEAN 1820 - 1897	
Book V)	1	Brothers and a Sermon	
COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR		(<i>extracts</i>)	86
1772 - 1834		JAMES, RICHARD 1592 - 1638	
Shurton Bars (<i>extract</i>)	48	Iter Lancastrense (<i>extracts</i>)	5
COTTON, CHARLES 1630 - 1687		KENDALL, HENRY 1841 - 1882	
Winter (<i>extracts</i>)	12	Arakoon	113
COWPER, WILLIAM 1731 - 1800		Sytinx	115
Ramsgate	35	KIPLING, RUDYARD 1865 - 1936	
CRABBE, GEORGE 1754 - 1832		Sussex (<i>extract</i>)	116
The Borough General Des-		LANDOR, WALTER SAVAGE	
cription (<i>extract</i>)	37	1775 - 1864	
Tales of the Hall Adventures		Heroic Idylls (<i>extract</i>)	51
of Richard (<i>extract</i>)	40	Hellenics (<i>extract</i>)	51

	PAGE		PAGE
LAWLESS, EMILY d 1913		SOTHEY, WILLIAM 1757 - 1833	
The Cormorant	117	On Crossing the Anglesea Strait to Bangor at Midnight	44
MARLOWE, CHRISTOPHER		SOUTHEY, ROBERT 1774 - 1843	
1564 - 1593		Madoc in Wales (<i>extract</i>)	49
Hero and Leander (<i>extract</i>)	3	The Curse of Kehama (<i>extract</i>)	50
MELVILLE, HERMAN 1819 - 1891		SWIFT, JONATHAN 1667 - 1745	
The Haglets (<i>extract</i>)	85	At Holyhead	26
The Aeolian Harp (<i>extract</i>)	85	SWINBURNE, ALGERNON CHARLES	
The Tuft of Kelp	86	1837 - 1909	
MILTON, JOHN 1608 - 1674		Evening by the Sea	102
Paradise Lost (<i>extract</i> from Book VII)	11	A Forsaken Garden	103
MONTGOMERY, JAMES 1771 - 1854		By the North Sea (<i>extract</i>)	105
A Sea Piece	46	Neap-tide	106
MORRIS, WILLIAM 1834 - 1896		TABLEY, LORD DE 1835 - 1895	
A Garden by the Sea	95	The Churchyard on the Sands	98
Iceland first Seen	96	The Ocean Wood	101
NOEL, HON RODEN 1834 - 1894		TENNYSON, ALFRED LORD	
A Sea Symphony (<i>extract</i>)	93	1809 - 1892	
Fowey (<i>extract</i>)	94	The Kraken	79
PEACOCK, THOMAS LOVE		Audley Court (<i>extract</i>)	80
1785 - 1866		Enoch Arden (<i>extract</i>)	80
St Peter of Scotland	55	The Passing of Arthur (<i>extracts</i>)	81
ROSSETTI, CHRISTINA 1830 - 1894		TENNYSON TURNER, CHARLES	
Sleep at Sea	89	1808 - 1879	
A Fisher-Wife	92	On Board a Jersey Steamer	78
ROSSETTI, DANTE GABRIEL		Little Sophy by the Seaside	78
1828 - 1882		The Seaside	79
The Sea-Limits	88	THOMSON, JAMES 1700 - 1748	
SANDYS, GEORGE 1578 - 1644		The Seasons (<i>extracts</i> from Autumn and Winter)	31
Ceyx and Alcyone (<i>extract</i> from Ovid's <i>Metamorphosis</i> , Book XI)	6	VERE, SIR AUBREY DE 1788 - 1846	
SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM		Ilfracombe By the Sea-shore	58
1564 - 1616		WADE, THOMAS 1805 - 1875	
Pericles (<i>extract</i>)	4	The Frozen Coast (<i>extract</i>)	75
SHELLEY, PERCY BYSSHE		A Night amid the Seaward Hills (<i>extract</i>)	77
1792 - 1822		WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM	
Julian and Maddalo (<i>extract</i>)	59	1770 - 1850	
		By the Sea-shore	46
		YOUNG, EDWARD 1684 - 1765	
		Ocean An Ode	27